

Recreational Salmon Regulations for 2018

Concise Explanatory Statement



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Recreational Salmon Regulations for 2018

This Concise Explanatory Statement (CES) describes the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) reasons for adopting the 2018 recreational salmon fishing rules and responds to public comments received on the proposed rules. The adopted rules are set forth in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 220-220-160, 220-312-020, 220-312-030, 220-312-040, 220-312-050, 220-312-060, 220-313-060 and 220-313-070.

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. Rule Development Process

The CR 101 notice of intended rulemaking was filed on January 18, 2018 (WSR 18-03-109). 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 was be presented in the CR 102 filing on June 6 2018 for formal public review and comment (WSR 18-12-120).

State, federal, tribal fishery managers and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) work collaboratively with recreational and commercial stakeholders during the North of Falcon and Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) meetings, to develop fishing plans based on best available science regarding expected salmon returns, Endangered Species Act (ESA) limits and agency and commission policies. The name "North of Falcon" (NOF) refers to Cape Falcon, Oregon, which is the southern border of active management for Washington salmon stocks. This process consists of a series of public meetings involving federal, state, tribal and industry representatives and other concerned citizens. 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 the Treaty Tribes sponsor additional meetings to discuss alternative fishing seasons that meet conservation and harvest sharing objectives. Additionally, WDFW 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 and hatchery escapement surveys and estimates by state and tribal

biologists. Biologists apportion catch in each area to specific management groups and calculate a total run-size for each group. Biologists complete this analysis, also known as a run-reconstruction, each fall or early winter. Based on total run-size and the associated survival rates, state and tribal biologists forecast the number of salmon and steelhead returning for the coming year. State and tribal biologists typically complete the forecasts each year by late-February, thus achieving a significant amount of work prior to start of developing fishing seasons. From the run size forecasts, 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 2018 annual public process for developing salmon fishery regulation proposals, known as the North of Falcon process, began on February 27 at the Lacey Community Center in Olympia. WDFW presented and discussed the 2018 preseason forecasts of salmon abundance with interested stakeholders. Implications of the forecasts and 2018 season planning were discussed in break-out sessions for the Columbia River, Ocean, and Puget Sound (all) during this meeting. Additional public meetings were as shown below in the Public Meeting Table.

Public Meeting Table. All meetings occurred in Washington State unless noted otherwise.

Geographic Area	Date(s)	Location
Willapa/Grays	February 26	Montesano
All	February 27	Olympia
Ocean	March 9-14	Rohnert Park, CA
Puget Sound	March 15	Sequim & North Coast
Columbia/Ocean	March 19	Ridgefield
Grays Harbor	March 19	Montesano
All	March 20	Olympia
Willapa Bay	March 22	Montesano
Ocean	March 26	Westport
Mid-Columbia/Snake	March 27	Clarkston
Puget Sound	March 27	Lacey
Grays Harbor	March 27	Montesano
Mid-Columbia/Snake	March 28	Wenatchee
Puget Sound	March 28	Mill Creek
Columbia River	March 29	Kennewick
Willapa Bay	March 29	Raymond
Columbia/Ocean	April 2	Ridgefield
All	April 3	Lynnwood
Grays Harbor	April 4	Montesano
Willapa Bay	April 5	Montesano

All	April 6-11	Portland, OR
Grays Harbor	April 17	Montesano

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 2018 planning process. WDFW considered the fishing regulation proposals shared at public meetings as a work in progress (i.e., not final proposals) that would be further informed by comments received from meeting participants. Additionally, fishing proposals were informed by the public comments received online via the North of Falcon WDFW website, for those individuals who could not attend the public meetings.

In the Puget Sound, during the 2018 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 2018 are 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.

In the Columbia River, the fisheries are managed under the *U.S. v Oregon* Management Agreement. This agreement outlines the escapement goals, ESA limits and tribal and non-tribal harvest sharing. Tribal fisheries in the Columbia River are determined at in-season hearings and are developed by the four Columbia River treaty tribes. Written and oral comments received during the NOF process were considered in the development of WDFW’s own package of rules. The Columbia River recreational salmon fishing seasons proposed for adoption by WDFW in 2018 are a product of both the *U.S v Oregon* Management Agreement, agency and commission policy guidance and the open public process component of the annual North of Falcon process. In addition, rule proposals developed in connection with these processes have been vetted based upon public input obtained in the formal public rule-making process undertaken by WDFW 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 was filed on June 6 and published in WSR

18-12-120, as part of WDFW's initial rule-making proposals for 2018. The filing included changes to Code (WAC) 220-220-160, 220-312-020, 220-312-030, 220-312-040, 220-312-050, 220-312-060, 220-313-060 and 220-313-070. Information regarding the proposed rule changes was electronically and physically mailed out to participants in the North of Falcon process who provided their contact information at meetings as well as posting it on WDFW's website.

Formal rule-making hearings were held on July 10, 2018 (Puget Sound Marine and Freshwater in the Natural Resource Building) July 10, 2018 (Columbia River at the Region 5 office), July 10, 2018 (Coastal Marine at the Region 6 office) and on July 11, 2018 (Coastal Freshwater at the Region 6 office) to provide an additional opportunity for comments to be received on the proposed rules as published in the Washington State Register. Of the four hearings, a total of 3 individuals attended the hearings for coastal marine and freshwater. No individuals provided verbal and written comments, which are mentioned in Section III. In addition to input during the public meetings, comments received by letter, electronic mail, and online on the North of Falcon WDFW website during the North of Falcon process were considered as part of the rule-making process.

Rationale for Adoption of Rules

WDFW considered all the facts and circumstances surrounding the proposed 2018 recreational salmon season. The agency carefully reviewed all input from the general public regarding preferred fishing rules during North of Falcon public meetings and the state's rule-making process. WDFW considered and relied upon the best technical and scientific information available to tribal and state fishery management experts, including pre-season forecasts of the abundance of salmon stocks and data that will be used during the season to update forecasts. Important characteristics of the recreational salmon fishery were considered, including the catch likely to result from the proposed rules, providing significant harvest opportunities, and the economic value of these fisheries. WDFW also considered fishing schedules of state commercial fisheries and the schedules of tribal fisheries, as in some cases these schedules must be coordinated with the state's recreational fishing schedules as part of the co-management process developed under sub-proceedings of *U.S. v Washington* and *U.S. v Oregon*.

Regulations for the 2018 recreational salmon fisheries were 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 2018 North of Falcon and APA public processes, 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., exploitation rate).

b) Manage fisheries consistent with Fish and Wildlife Commission Policies POLC3608 (2018-2019 North of Falcon) and C3619 (Hatchery and Fishery Reform).

c) Monitor fisheries to ensure a & b are met.

2) 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

North Coast

Modifications to North Coastal sport fishing regulations adopted for 2018 through this rulemaking process were:

- The Hoh River will close to all recreational fishing from May 1 through May 31, and September 1 – 15 to protect depressed wild spring/summer Chinook salmon. The Hoh will open June 1 – August 31 for trout, and retention of dip-in hatchery Chinook will be allowed June 1 – 30. Bait is not allowed June 1 – September 15.
- The fall salmon season will open for the traditional September 1 through November 30 season in the Quillayute System. In the Hoh River the season will be September 16th through November 30, and the usual October 16 through November 30 in the section of the Hoh from the oxbow boat ramp upstream to Morgan's Crossing. The Clearwater and Salmon rivers in the Queets system will open September 1 and close early, on October 1 because of a low wild coho forecast. Escapement of Queets River natural coho is projected to be below the escapement goal of 5,800. However, the co-managers agreed to model fisheries at levels that produce a lower escapement for 2018. While season lengths vary, daily bag limits in

all the North Coast rivers will still reflect a conservative approach for wild coho salmon, as detailed below.

- The rivers in the Quillayute System: Where returning hatchery coho salmon are expected to be present (Quillayute River and Sol Duc River below the hatchery), the daily bag limit will be 6 salmon, of which only three may be adults, only one may be a Chinook, only one a sockeye, and release wild adult coho.
- The daily bag limit in the Bogachiel, a tributary of the Quillayute system, will remain as in 2017 at 3 salmon, only one of which may be an adult. The Calawah and Dickey rivers, also tributaries to the Quillayute system, will open with daily bag limits of 3 salmon, only one of which may be an adult, release wild coho.
- The daily bag limit in the Hoh River will be 6 salmon, 2 adults, of which only one may be a Chinook.
- Clearwater River, a tributary to the Queets River, will have a daily bag limit of 3 salmon, only one adult, and release wild coho. Salmon River, tributary to the Queets River, will have a daily bag limit of 6 salmon, 2 adults, only one of which may be a Chinook. Release wild coho. Both rivers close October 1 – November 30 to avoid wild coho encounters.

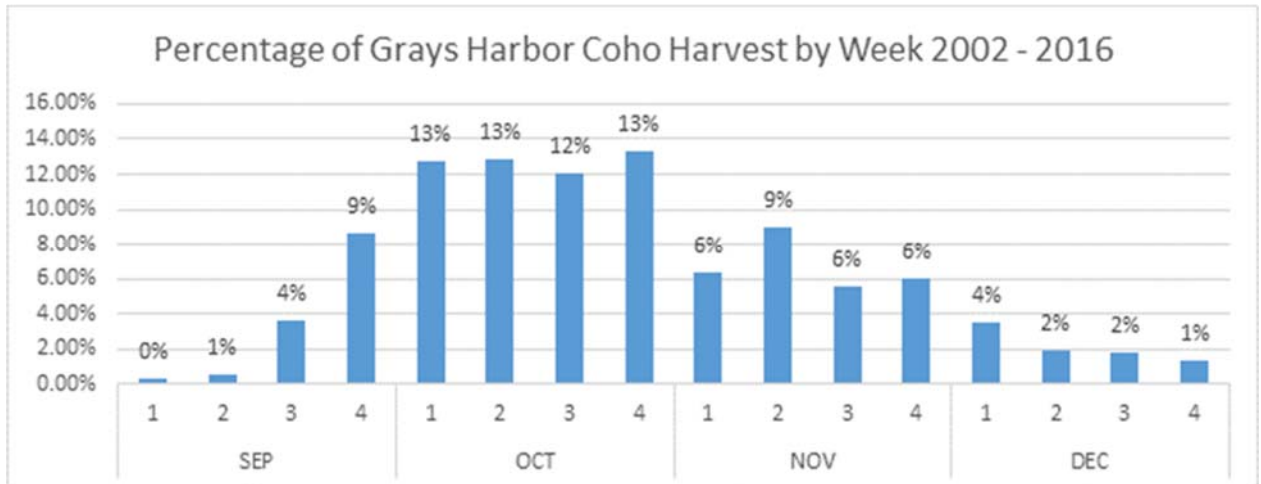
The wild coho stocks and the Hoh River spring/summer Chinook stock were the focus on the North Coast for the 2018 season planning process. The management objective for Hoh River spring/summer Chinook is an escapement rate of 69% with an escapement floor of 900 fish. The 2018 return to the river is expected to be near this floor, with the run forecast at 1,092. In response to the low forecast, and to address Objectives 1a, 1b, and 2 above, the adopted rules have the sport fishery in the Hoh River closed to all fishing in May 2018, then opening to trout and other game fish June 1 through August 31, with hatchery origin Chinook retention allowed June 1 – 30. The fishery then closes again September 1 – 15 out of concern for the spring/summer Chinook stock. In 2015, 2016, and 2017 the river was also closed during some or all of the summer period to all recreational fishing in response to the low spring/summer Chinook numbers. Since the 2008, season anglers have been required to release wild (unclipped) Hoh spring/summer Chinook. The Hoh Tribe's fishery and the sport fishery in 2018 are targeting hatchery dip-in Chinook. Like the sport fishery, the Tribe is also closing for two weeks in early September to allow the remaining spring/summer Chinook to move up the river.

Grays Harbor

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted the Grays Harbor Basin Salmon Management Policy (C-3621) in February of 2014. This action followed an extensive public process with multiple public comment periods. The policy provides management direction to WDFW in terms of sharing between the recreational and commercial sectors and between freshwater and marine water recreational sectors, and achievement of conservation objectives.

Regulations for the 2018 Grays Harbor freshwater recreational salmon fisheries were evaluated with respect to objectives in the policy. These objectives were shared with industry representatives, members of the Advisory Group, and the public during the North of Falcon public process. General or recreational specific pre-season planning objectives are:

1. Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for natural origin salmon.
2. For spring Chinook, prioritize freshwater recreational fisheries, with an objective of opening freshwater areas no later than May 1.
3. The fishery management objectives for fall Chinook salmon, in priority order, are to:
 - Achieve spawner goals;
 - Provide meaningful recreational fishing opportunities; and
 - Limit commercial fishery impacts to the incidental harvest of fall Chinook during fisheries directed at other species.
4. For Chehalis River basin natural-origin fall Chinook, the predicted fishery impact in WDFW-managed fisheries will not exceed 5% of those adults returning to Grays Harbor because the number of natural-origin spawners was less than the goal in 3 out of the last 5 years.
5. For Humptulips River Chinook, the WDFW-managed fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals.
6. Grays Harbor Coho will be managed to no more than a 20.5% total exploitation rate as directed by the Pacific Salmon Treaty. This is Guiding Principle number 3 in the Grays Harbor Salmon Management Policy.



7. Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for wild and hatchery Chum salmon. No fisheries directed at Chum salmon shall occur unless the adult Coho salmon return exceeds spawner objectives, or if Coho salmon impacts remain after Coho and Chinook salmon fisheries.

The rules, as noticed in the CR-102, were proposed based upon a conclusion that they would produce fisheries consistent with the overriding conservation objectives identified above, and with the Commission policy direction to provide “meaningful” opportunities for both recreational anglers and commercial harvesters.

WDFW concludes that the final adopted 2018 Grays Harbor recreational fishing regulations are consistent with these management objectives based on the following rationale:

1. Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for natural origin salmon.

Fisheries modeled in Grays Harbor (including treaty harvest) are expected to result in achievement of escapement goals for Chehalis River spring Chinook, Chehalis River natural-origin Coho, Humptulips River natural-origin Chinook, and Grays Harbor Chum. Chehalis River natural-origin Chinook are forecast to return at a level that is less than 10% above the goal. The adopted rules do not allow any directed fisheries on Chehalis River natural-origin Chinook. Thus, a low level of incidental bycatch mortality due to catch and release will occur while targeting healthy stocks, but are less than the criteria in Objective 4. Humptulips River natural-origin Coho are forecast to return at a level that is below the escapement goal. That is, the Coho are not expected to meet the goal regardless of whether fisheries occur or not. The adopted rules do not have any directed fisheries on Humptulips River natural-origin Coho and anglers must release them unharmed. Thus, a low level of

incidental bycatch mortality due to catch and release will occur while targeting healthy stocks, but it is less than the criteria in objective 6.

Stock	Objective Type	Objective Criteria	Modeled Results
Chehalis Natural-origin fall Chinook	Harvest Impact Rate	< 5.0%	3.1%
Chehalis Natural-origin Spring Chinook	Escapement Goal	1,400	1,530
Humptulips Natural-origin Chinook	Escapement Goal	3,573	3,909
Grays Harbor Natural-origin Coho	Total Exploitation Rate	≤ 20.5%	20.5%
Grays Harbor Chum	Escapement Goal	21,000	36,347

2. For spring Chinook, prioritize freshwater recreational fisheries, with an objective of opening freshwater areas no later than May 1.

The adopted rule provides freshwater recreational fisheries on Chehalis River spring Chinook that is predicted to result in 4.4% impact. The escapement estimate after all fisheries is 1,530, 130 fish above the goal.

3. The fishery management objectives for fall Chinook salmon, in priority order, are to:

- Achieve spawner goals.

The scheduled fisheries in the adopted rule are expected to result in 3,909 Humptulips River natural-origin spawners compared to a spawning goal of 3,573.

- Provide meaningful recreational fishing opportunities.

Within the constraints of the policy, recreational fishing opportunities have been provided for Humptulips River Chinook in both the marine area and the Humptulips River.

4. For Chehalis River basin natural-origin fall Chinook, the predicted fishery impact in WDFW managed fisheries will not exceed 5% of the adult return to Grays Harbor because the number of natural-origin spawners was less than the goal in 3 out of the last 5 years.

The predicted impact on Chehalis River natural-origin fall Chinook during the scheduled fisheries in the adopted rule is 1.75%. Including all WDFW managed non-treaty fishery

(commercial and recreational marine and freshwater) results in a predicted impact of 3.1%. This is well within the guidance of the Policy.

5. For Humptulips River natural-origin fall Chinook, the WDFW managed fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goal.

The scheduled fisheries in the adopted rule are expected to result in an escapement of 4,214 Humptulips River natural-origin spawners compared to a spawning goal of 3,573.

6. Grays Harbor natural-origin Coho will be managed to no more than a 20.7% total exploitation rate as directed by the Pacific Salmon Treaty. This is Guiding Principle number 3 in the Grays Harbor Salmon Management Policy.

- PST obligations supersede Grays Harbor Salmon Management Policy.
- Chehalis Coho predicted to escape 29,869, which is above the basin goal of 28,506. Adopted rule 4.9% impact
- Humptulips forecast is 4,717 which is 2,177 less than the goal, policy 5%, adopted rule 3.95%.

The total predicted impact on Humptulips River natural-origin Coho during the scheduled fisheries in the adopted rule and including the WDFW managed non-treaty commercial fishery is 3.49%.

7. Fisheries will be managed with the intent of achieving escapement goals for wild and hatchery Chum salmon. No fisheries directed at Chum salmon shall occur unless the adult Coho salmon return exceeds spawner objectives, or if Coho salmon impacts remain after Coho and Chinook salmon fisheries.

The scheduled fisheries in the adopted rule are expected to result in an impact of 1,409 Grays Harbor Chum. This impact is far less than half the available surplus. The forecasted return of Grays Harbor chum is 61,144 and predicted escapement after all Grays Harbor fisheries, treaty and non-treaty, is 36,347 compared to the goal of 21,000.

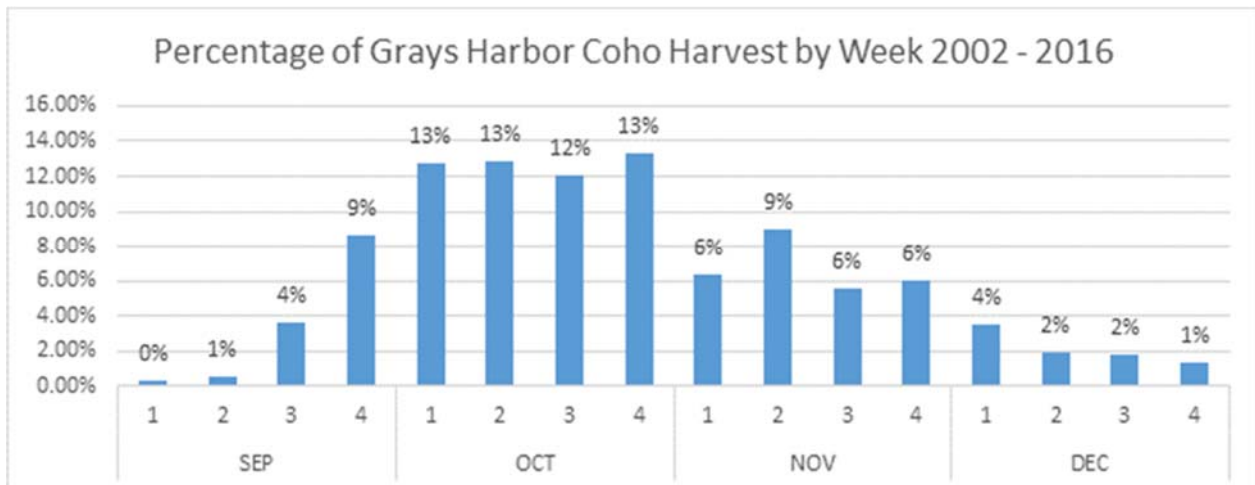
To address the second part of the objective, scheduled fisheries in the adopted rule achieve the policy objective guidelines, including achieving the escapement goal for Chehalis River natural-origin Coho and minimizing total WDFW managed fisheries to 5% or less impact on Humptulips River natural-origin Coho, and therefore Coho impacts remain allowing for directed Chum fisheries to occur.

Comments Received to Date

Several comments were received requesting to extend the season into December. This included two categories of comments, one, extend the season into December by delaying the opening date later in October, and two, extend the season into December by reducing the bag limit to one, thus providing impact saving.

WDFW evaluated shifting the current proposed freshwater salmon season for October 1 through November 30 to October 16 through December 15. The model evaluation showed that this approach could essentially be impact neutral in regards to wild Coho. Further evaluation of total Coho harvest under this “shifting of the season” approach would result in the reduction of harvest of hatchery Coho by 278 fish; this would represent a harvest reduction of 7.1% of the total freshwater Coho harvest. WDFW also evaluated reducing the bag limit during freshwater salmon season from a two fish to a one fish adult bag limit in order to extend freshwater recreational salmon opportunity into the month of December. Similar to the open-dates change, our analysis of the reduction in bag limit would result in a small reduction in total impacts to wild Coho by approximately 30 fish, but once again, reduce the total harvest of hatchery Coho. Catch Record Card (CRC) data indicates that 78% of the total Coho harvest occurs within the October to November period (Figure 1). Conversely, only 6% of the total Coho harvest takes place during the first two weeks of December.

Figure 1. Percentage of Grays Harbor Coho harvest using CRC data for the years 2002 through 2016.



After careful consideration of the input received, Commission policy on salmon management in the Grays Harbor Basin, conservation objectives, and the additional analysis summarized above, the proposed rule provides the best opportunity for harvest of the abundant hatchery Coho returning to Grays Harbor.

Willapa Bay

The Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted a new Willapa Bay Salmon Management policy (C-3622) in June of 2015. This action followed an extensive public process

with multiple public comment periods. The policy provides general management guidance to WDFW in terms of sharing between the recreational and commercial sectors, and achievement of conservation objectives.

Regulations for the 2018 Willapa Bay recreational salmon fisheries were evaluated with respect to the objectives in the policy. These objectives were shared with industry representatives, members of the Advisory Group, and the public during the North of Falcon process. General or recreational specific pre-season planning objectives are:

1. The recreational fishery management objectives for fall Chinook salmon in 2018, in priority order, are to:
 - Not exceed a 20% impact rate during Willapa Bay fisheries on Willapa and Naselle river natural-origin fall Chinook. Within the impact rate cap, the priority shall be to maintain a full season of recreational fisheries for Chinook salmon in the Willapa Bay Basin;
 - Provide enhanced recreational fishing opportunities.
 - Increase participation and/or catch including consideration of increased daily limits, earlier openings, and use of multiple rods;
 - Conservation actions, as necessary, shall be shared equally between marine and freshwater fisheries; and
2. The recreational fishery management objectives for Coho and Chum salmon, in priority order, are to:
 - Achieve spawner goals;
 - Provide recreational fishing opportunities.

The rules, as originally noticed in the CR-102, were proposed based upon a conclusion that they would produce fisheries consistent with conservation objectives, with the guidance identified above, and with the Commission policy direction to provide “enhanced” opportunities for recreational fisheries anglers.

On February 16, 2018, the Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) provided the Department with additional guidance on the implementation of policy C-3622 for the 2018 season. The general guidance provided states that “policy implementation in 2018 to achieve priorities or goals for one fishing sector should not result in eliminating the opportunity of any fishing sector”. More specifically, for recreational salmon fisheries prosecuted in Willapa Bay for the 2018 season, the FWC’s guidance directed the Department to design the 2018 fishery to:

- Explore a reduction in the four adult salmon bag limit;
- Curtail high catch periods in June, July and early August if necessary to conform to this guidance;
- Focus on mark selective fishing where ever practical;

- Not exceed 20% impact on wild Chinook after accounting for incidental impacts needed in commercial fisheries (see below); and
- Include active monitoring of the bay fishery prior to September 30 and active management of the bay fishery if the total fishery impact ceiling of 20% on natural-origin fish is in reasonable jeopardy of being exceeded.

This guidance applies only to 2018. All other items in the Willapa Bay Salmon Management Policy C-3622 will remain in effect for 2018.

WDFW concludes that the final adopted 2018 Willapa Bay recreational fishing regulations are consistent with these management objectives based on the following rationale:

1. The recreational fishery management objectives for fall Chinook salmon in 2018, in priority order, are to:

- Not exceed a 20% impact rate during Willapa Bay fisheries on Willapa and Naselle river natural-origin fall Chinook. Within the impact rate cap, the priority shall be to maintain a full season of recreational fisheries for Chinook salmon in the Willapa Bay Basin.

The predicted impact rate for Willapa River and Naselle River natural-origin Chinook during salmon fisheries prosecuted within the Willapa Bay basin were 18.9% and 16.8%, respectively.

- Provide enhanced recreational fishing opportunities.
 - Increase participation and/or catch including consideration of increased daily limits, earlier openings, and use of multiple rods.

Regulation changes in the adopted regulation will continue to increase participation and/or catch during the 2018 season including increased bag limits, opening areas earlier, opening more areas, and the expansion of areas for two-pole endorsements. The adult salmon bag limit for the 2018 recreational salmon freshwater fisheries throughout Willapa Bay remains at four adult salmon for most systems. However, the retention of only one wild, adult Coho is allowed. All other freshwater regulations from 2017 will remain in effect for 2018.

Willapa Bay needs additional conservation for wild, unmarked Chinook. To address this concern, all recreational fisheries, both marine and freshwater, require the release of wild, unmarked Chinook. Marine Area 2.1 regulations are similar to 2017 with a start date of August 1, 2018. Beginning August 1, 2018, only one Coho is allowed to be retained in Marine Area 2.1. Prior to August 1, 2018, Willapa Bay will follow the rules for Ocean Area 2, which did not begin until July 1, 2018.

From August 1, 2018 through September 30, 2018, a new Willapa Bay Control Zone area at the mouth of Marine Area 2.1 will be closed to salmon fishing. The Willapa Bay Control Zone is defined as having a westerly boundary in the form of a line from Leadbetter Point (46° 39.20' N, 124° 3.516' W) due west to 46° 39.20' N, 124° 5.3' W then north to the westerly most landfall on Cape Shoalwater (46° 44.66' N, 124° 5.3' W) and from Leadbetter Point through green marker 11 to landfall.

2. The fishery management objectives for Coho and Chum salmon, in priority order, are to:

- Achieve spawner goals.

Combined fisheries modeled in Willapa Bay are expected to result in achievement of escapement goals for both Willapa Bay Coho and Chum stocks. The Willapa Bay escapement goal for natural-origin Coho is 13,600 fish. The modeled fisheries allow the escapement to spawning areas of 15,243 natural-origin Coho and 26,721 hatchery-origin Coho. This predicted escapement does exceed the 17,200 naturally spawning Coho goal established by the Pacific Fishery Management Council. The number of Willapa Bay Chum predicted to escape in the proposed fishery is 36,352 exceeding the goal of 35,400.

- Provide recreational fishing opportunities;
- Recreational fisheries will be allowed to retain Chum salmon.

Columbia River

Forecasts for the Upriver Bright Fall Chinook was 200,100 and is a surrogate for the Snake River Wild Fall Chinook ESA limits in-river for non-treaty fisheries. Below a runsize of 200,000 the exploitation rate limit is 8.25%, and above a runsize of 200,000 is 15%. Due to poor ocean conditions and the majority of the impacts occurring below Bonneville, fishery managers limited impacts to 8.25% as a precautionary move. A run update likely will occur about September 10 and may allow additional opportunities to harvest Chinook. Less constraining stock impacts (Tule) were reserved to provide necessary coverage if fishery restrictions were relaxed.

Allocations by recreational and commercial sectors were followed based upon concurrence between Washington and Oregon Columbia River policies. Due to efforts with rule simplification and low forecasts, public input led fishery managers to share the restrictions within fisheries and attempt to provide similar regulations.

Buoy 10 to Bonneville Dam mainstem

1. From the Astoria-Megler Bridge upstream to Bonneville Dam will be open from June 22 through July 4 (13 days) for adult hatchery summer Chinook, with a two fish/two Chinook daily limit. The management guideline for this fishery is approximately 2,400 summer Chinook due to fewer fish available within this sector of the allocation.
2. Sockeye retention is prohibited due to low forecasts and not expected to meet escapement goals for the Wenatchee stock in particular.
3. Night closure is rescinded and a 2 fish limit is permitted starting June 16 as steelhead conservation concerns are not as limiting as they were in 2017.
4. The Buoy 10 recreational fishery will begin on August 1 with a one adult salmonid daily limit through August 24. From August 25 through December 31, Chinook retention will be closed, but the daily limit will increase to two adult hatchery salmonids (Coho and steelhead only) through December 31.
5. The mainstem recreational fishery from the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line upstream to Bonneville Dam will be open August 1 through December 31, but Chinook retention seasons vary by river section based on area-specific sub-allocations for URB Chinook. From the Rocky Point/Tongue Point line upstream to the Lewis River/Warrior Rock line, Chinook retention will be allowed August 1 through September 2. The daily adult limit is one salmonid through September 2. Beginning September 3, Chinook retention closes but the daily adult limit will increase to two salmonids (hatchery Coho and hatchery steelhead only) through December 31. From the Lewis River/Warrior Rock line upstream to Bonneville Dam, the fishery will be open for Chinook retention August 1 through September 14 with a one adult salmonid daily limit. Beginning September 15, Chinook retention closes but the daily adult limit will increase to two salmonids (hatchery Coho and hatchery steelhead only) through December 31.
6. From August 1 through December 31, the daily limit may not include more than one steelhead due to angler concerns with steelhead impacts.

Bonneville Dam to Hwy. 395 Bridge at Pasco mainstem

1. Open from June 16 through July 31 for hatchery summer Chinook, with a two fish/two Chinook daily limit. The management guideline for this fishery is 425 summer Chinook from Bonneville to Priest Rapids Dam.
2. Sockeye retention is prohibited due to low forecasts and not expected to meet escapement goals for the Wenatchee stock in particular.
3. Open August 1 with a two salmonid/one Chinook daily adult limit. The fishery will be managed in-season based on actual catches and the URB run size. The daily adult salmonid limit may not include more than one Chinook or one hatchery

steelhead (August 1 through December 31). Based on the preseason URB run-size, this fishery will be managed for 1,630 adult Chinook mortalities.

4. From August 1 through December 31, the daily limit may not include more than one steelhead due to angler concerns with steelhead impacts.

Hwy. 395 Bridge to Old Hanford townsite wooden powerline towers - mainstem

- 1) With the projected return of Upper Columbia A-run steelhead in 2018 to near normal numbers, WDFW returned to a standard daily limit to two Ringold Springs Hatchery-origin steelhead from October 1-31. Steelhead released from Ringold Springs Hatchery are adipose and right ventral fin clipped. Anglers are restricted to harvesting only Ringold Springs Hatchery steelhead to reduce impacts to Upper Columbia River (UCR) hatchery and wild steelhead migrating through the Hanford Reach.
- 2) From November 1 through March 31, daily limit is two hatchery steelhead for the same reasons as above. The majority of UCR steelhead have migrated upstream of Priest Rapids Dam allowing the harvest of any hatchery steelhead after November 1. Same steelhead rule rationale applies in the Ringold Area Bank Fishery that is open April 1-15.
- 3) The fall salmon fishery will be open through October 31. Under the "Sportfishing Rule Simplification" opening and closing dates for salmon and steelhead fisheries will be standardize to occur on the first, middle, or last day of the month. This area of the Columbia River has limited spawning habitat and extension of the fishery through October 31 will provide additional angler opportunity without impacting spawn success of Hanford Reach up-river bright fall chinook.

Old Hanford townsite wooden powerline towers to Priest Rapids Dam – mainstem

- 1) The fall chinook salmon fishery will be open through October 15. Under the "Sportfishing Rule Simplification" opening and closing dates for salmon and steelhead fisheries will be standardize to occur on the first, middle, or last day of the month. This area of the Columbia River is the primary spawning grounds for Hanford Reach Up-River Bright fall chinook. Fall chinook begin spawning in this section of the Columbia River approximately the third week of October.

Columbia River tributaries

Proposals considered through the 2018 North of Falcon process for recreational fisheries occurring in Columbia River tributaries:

1. Remove language that “only fish hooked inside the mouth may be retained” from anti-snagging areas on Blue Creek, Cowlitz River, Drano Lake, Elochoman River, Grays River, Kalama River, Klickitat River, Lewis River, Mill Creek, North Fork Toutle River, West Fork Grays River, Tilton River, Washougal River, White Salmon River, and Wind River to simplify rules
2. Standardize Lewis River salmon seasons to specific calendar dates (i.e. September 30, as opposed to 4th Saturday in September) to simplify rules
3. Consolidate stream sections on the White Salmon River to reduce sections and simplify rules
4. Expand area where the two pole fishing endorsement applies on the Cowlitz and Lewis Rivers to simplify rules and provide additional opportunity
5. Increase the hatchery coho daily limit to 3 adults on the lower Cowlitz River based on preseason forecasts
6. Reduce hatchery Chinook daily limit to one adult on the Toutle River and close the Green River to Chinook retention to help ensure broodstock collection goals are met, based on pre-season forecast
7. Increase the daily limit of hatchery Chinook to 3 adults on the Kalama River based on preseason forecast
8. Reduce the fall Chinook daily limit to one fish on the Lewis River and prohibit fishing from a floating device between Johnson Creek and Colvin Creek from October 1 to November 30 to ensure escapement goals are met, based on pre-season forecasts
9. Remove summer night closures from Drano Lake and the White Salmon River, which were added the previous year to protect the extremely low run of upper Columbia River summer steelhead in 2017. The 2018 summer steelhead forecast has improved enough to lift these regulations.
10. Modify the hatchery steelhead daily limit in Drano Lake to 1 fish to match adjacent area of the Columbia River Aug. 1 – Dec. 31, based on pre-season forecast and to simplify rules.

2018 Constraining Stock Table.

Stock	Objective Type	Objective Criteria	Modeled Result
Wenatchee sockeye	Escapement		
Upper Columbia summer Chinook	Harvest Rate	50% of 75% forecast plus 10,500	50% of 75% forecast plus 10,500

Tule Fall Chinook	ESA impact rate	<38% total	37.7%
Snake River Wild Fall Chinook	In-river ESA impact rate	<15%	8.24%
Lower Columbia Natural Coho	ESA impact rate	<18%	15.3%

Yakima River

Mouth (Highway 240 Bridge) to 400' below Prosser Dam

The fall salmon fishery will be open through October 31. Under the "Sportfishing Rule Simplification", opening and closing dates for salmon and steelhead fisheries will occur on the first, middle, or last day of the month. This area of the Yakima River has limited spawning habitat and extension of the fishery through October 31 will provide additional angler opportunity without impacting spawn success of fall chinook and coho in this area of the Yakima River.

Puget Sound

State and tribal salmon seasons in Puget Sound are driven primarily by certain key constraining stocks (Objectives 1a, 1b, and 2). Key constraining stocks in state and tribal fisheries in these areas for 2018 include, Nooksack spring natural Chinook, Mid-Hood Canal natural Chinook, Snohomish natural coho, Strait of Juan DeFuca natural coho, and Queets natural coho. For example, the management objective for Nooksack spring natural Chinook is a Southern U.S. exploitation rate ceiling of 10.5% as defined in the ESA approved harvest management plan. The management objective for coho is based upon Comprehensive Coho Management Plan (1998) and sections of the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

2018 Constraining Stock Table.

Stock	Objective Type	Objective Criteria	Modeled Result
Nooksack spring natural Chinook	Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	$\leq 10.5\%$	10.5%
Mid-Hood Canal natural Chinook	Pre-terminal Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	$\leq 12.0\%$	12.0%
Snohomish natural coho	Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	$\leq 40\%$	$\leq 33.5\%$

Strait of Juan de Fuca natural coho	Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	$\leq 10.0\%$	6.7%
Stillaguamish natural coho	Southern U.S. Exploitation Rate	$\leq 35\%$	34.5%

Certain other stocks continued to not meet management objectives, similar to 2017. Fishing regulations and restrictions in 2018 are similar as previous year’s regulations that were designed to reduce mortality on those stocks, i.e. no changes were proposed for 2018. For example, Lake Washington sockeye salmon were forecast to be below the escapement goal objective. The sockeye recreational fishery in Lake Washington in 2018 was not listed as open unless sufficient sockeye are counted at the Ballard Locks, as was the case in 2017. Because protective regulations were already in the permanent rules, we did not propose a change to the Lake Washington sockeye salmon regulations in this rule-making package.

Some fisheries were modified to reduce conflict with tribal fisheries and/or to ensure orderly fisheries (Objective 3). Puget Sound regulation changes were proposed based on North of Falcon discussions with stakeholders and tribal co-Managers. These changes maximize recreational opportunity while meeting conservation objections.

Modifications proposed for 2018 Puget Sound Marine Area recreational fisheries through this rule-making process include:

- Retention of both wild and hatchery coho is permitted in most marine areas when open for other species (i.e., Chinook,) due to sufficient hatchery coho returns and slightly improved wild coho returns for most systems.
- Areas 5 and 6 winter Chinook season reduced to protect Nooksack spring natural Chinook.
- Area 7 winter Chinook season reduced, closure of Eastern/Rosario Strait during July to protect Nooksack spring natural Chinook.
- Area 6 delayed start of Chinook season until July 3rd to help meet mid-Hood Canal Chinook conservation objective.
- Area 7 September 4 closure of Chinook retention to help meet mid-Hood Canal Chinook conservation objective.
- Area 8-2 September 23 closure to meet both Snohomish and Stillaguamish natural coho management objectives.
- Areas 8-1 and 8-2 reduced season by one month to address sub-legal Chinook encounters.
- Area 9 reduced season by 1 month to address Nooksack Spring Chinook objective.

- Area 10 reduced winter season and shift season to later spring to address mid-Hood Canal Chinook and sub-legal Chinook encounters.
- Closure of Elliot Bay to Chinook retention to meet Mid Hood canal Chinook objective.
- Area 12 north of Ayock Point coho fishery opens in September to harvest surplus coho while protecting wild Chinook.

The proposed regulations were adopted with modifications as listed in 'II. Corrections to the WSR 18-12-120' section.

Modifications proposed for 2018 Puget Sound Freshwater recreational fisheries through this rule-making process include:

- Numerous river sections were consolidated and regulations were standardized where feasible to simplify regulations.
- Baker Lake sockeye daily limit decreased to three due to smaller run of sockeye expected.
- Skagit River sockeye fishery closed dates adjusted to reflect co-manager agreement and avoid use conflicts.
- Lake Washington, Lake Sammamish, Green, Puyallup, Carbon and Nisqually rivers open to fishing for coho and gamefish, and their associated tributaries open to fishing for gamefish due to increased coho returns expected.
- Snohomish, Skykomish, Snoqualmie, and Wallace rivers have a reduced coho season of September 16 through November 15th to reduce impacts on wild coho.
- Stillaguamish and associated tributary gamefish and salmon fishery closures to protect wild Chinook salmon due to low returns expected.
- Green River stretch changes include an expansion of the lower section for Chinook retention and a 100 foot closer around Soos Creek was added .
- Puyallup and Carbon rivers opened with adjusted day closures to reflect tribal fisheries simplify regulations and harvest surplus hatchery Chinook and coho.
- Nisqually River closed to salmon fishing after September 30 due to low forecasted returns of coho salmon, to protect winter chum, and to simplify regulations.
- Dewatto River closed to salmon fishing as part of an effort to improve summer chum egg survival. The coho fishery in the lower Dewatto has occurred in the same reaches where summer chum spawning is concentrated, and activity associated with salmon fishing may decrease survival of their eggs during incubation.
- Big Quilcene applies anti-snagging rule and allows coho hooked outside the mouth to be retained to encounters of summer chum while allowing harvest on surplus of hatchery coho.

The proposed regulations were adopted with minor modifications as listed in 'II. Corrections to the WSR 18-12-120' section.

II. Corrections to the WSR 18-12-120

(WAC) 220-312-020: Clearwater River- Species Correction, Hoh River- Season Correction, Naselle River- Season Correction, Salmon River- Season Correction, Willapa River- Season Correction

(WAC) 220-312-030: Swift Reservoir – Steelhead Rule Correction, Tilton River- Season Correction, Washougal River- Season Clarification

(WAC) 220-312-040: Nooksack River – Retention Correction, Ross Lake Tributaries- Location Clarification

(WAC) 220-312-050: Chelan River- Species Correction, Entiat River- Species Correction, Jasmine Creek- Species Correction, Okanogan River- Species Correction, Salmon Creek- Species Correction, Similkameen River- Species Correction, Wenatchee Lake- Species Correction,

(WAC) 220-312-060: From Priest Rapids Dam to Rock Island Dam- Species Correction, From Rock Island Dam to Wells Dam- Species Correction, From Wells to Highway 173 Bridge at Brewster- Species Correction, From Highway 173 at Brewster to Chief Joseph Dam- Species Correction

(WAC) 220-313-060: Catch Record Card Area 10- Date Correction, Catch Record Card Area 12- Subarea Correction

(WAC) 220-313-070: Catch Record Card Area 1 – Date Correction, Willapa Bay- Area Clarification

III. Response to Comments Received During Comment Period for WSR 18-12-120

No verbal and/or written comments were submitted during this comment period or at any of the public hearings.

Conclusion

WDFW has considered all the facts and circumstances surrounding the 2018 recreational salmon season schedule. The agency carefully reviewed all input from the public during the North of Falcon public meetings and the state's rule making process. The agency's 2018 recreational salmon fishing regulations comply with its statutory mandate and are consistent with WDFW's management objectives for these fisheries.