
Summary Sheet

Meeting dates:	June 12, 2020
Agenda item:	Columbia River Salmon Fishery Policy Review – Update and Public Input
Presenter(s):	Bill Tweit, Special Assistant, Fish Program and Ryan Lothrop, Columbia River Fisheries Manager

Background summary:

In January 2013, the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission (WFWC) adopted Policy C-3620. The policy was amended in 2017 and 2019, and expires in 2023.

The objectives of the policy “are to promote orderly fisheries (particularly in waters in which the states of Oregon (OR) and Washington (WA) have concurrent jurisdiction), advance the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead, and maintain or enhance the economic well-being and stability of the fishing industry in the state.” The policy recognizes uncertainty in implementation, depends on continued economic and biological analysis, and relies on an adaptive management approach.

Staff developed a five-year policy performance report during 2018 with stakeholder input. OR and WA Commissions held a joint meeting to discuss Columbia River issues and indicated interest in reaching policy and regulatory concurrency between the two states. The two Commissions agreed to create the Joint-State Columbia River Fishery Policy Review Committee (PRC) consisting of three Washington and three Oregon commissioners to develop recommendations to the full Commissions in each State.

The PRC met in 2019 on January 17, February 6, February 26, March 14, August 1, August 29, and October 1. The intent was to develop PRC framework, review fishery information, and develop recommendations to each state’s Commission to consider for adoption. The two primary focuses of the PRC were to, first, provide recommendations that will achieve concurrency for the short-term, and secondly develop potential modifications for the long-term by reviewing a range of alternatives.

The PRC was able to reach a recommendation on February 26 in order to maintain concurrency for the short-term, for each state to consider. Their recommendation was approved by the WFWC on March 2, 2019, and is as follows:

- Transition Period with amendment for Spring Chinook Transition Period refers to all the allocations and gear types allowed in 2016.
 - Last year moving from gillnets to alternative gear.
 - Change from mandatory barbless hooks to voluntary barbless hooks effective as soon as practical but by June 1, 2019 at the latest.
 - Good faith progress toward recommending a comprehensive Columbia River salmon fishery policy for 2020 and beyond, to be completed as soon as possible. The policies embodied in this motion are intended to be in place until such comprehensive policy is adopted.
 - To be used only in 2019, the motion is amended such that the 80%/20% sport/commercial allocation, with no buffer applied to the commercial share and no mainstem commercial fishing, is to be used unless the Upriver run size update is more than 129% of the Upriver spring Chinook pre-season forecast of 99,300.
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The PRC continued work on the long-term during the summer and fall of 2019. The November 18 meeting was cancelled, and subsequently the PRC was suspended in January of 2020 due to OR Commission turnover. The WFWC approved Director Delegation in order to be concurrent with OR for 2020 only. WA adopted the OR rule on all allocation/gears and hook regulation with one exception where the spring Chinook allocation is 75%/25% sport/commercial.

WFWC created the Columbia River Salmon Fishery Policy Workgroup (CRW) to develop potential modifications for the long-term by reviewing a range of alternatives. CRW members are Commissioners Graybill, Kehoe, and McIsaac. The CRW met on March 20 and May 27, 2020, and scheduled a June 10 meeting. The intent is to develop the CRW framework, review fishery information, and develop recommendations for the WFWC to consider for adoption.

Staff recommendation:

Not applicable.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

At this meeting, the Commission will receive a progress report from staff and the three Commissioners on the CRW.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

Not applicable.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Public engagement and comments were received during the WA Policy review process during 2018 and are incorporated in the five-year policy performance report. The PRC meetings were open to the public and since August 1, 2019, have allowed for public comments; online commenting became available shortly thereafter and was distributed to PRC Commissioners. CRW meetings are open to the public and has allowed public testimony except March 20, 2020 due to meetings being transitioned to virtual meetings because of COVID-19; online commenting has continued to be available. PRC and CRW meeting materials and online commenting is available at: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/about/commission/columbia-river-policy-review>. Staff has continued to provide updates to the commercial and recreational advisor groups. The Commission will take public input at this meeting.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Review progress report from the PRC.

Draft motion language:

None anticipated.

Post decision communications plan:

Staff will continue make the CRW information available to the public and engage with stakeholders as necessary.