

Non-native Game Fish and Fisheries Policy

Steve Caromile, Inland Fish Program Manager
Kirt Hughes, Fish Management Division Manager



Schedule

2021		
Late-January	Fish Committee Briefing	Briefing on initial draft policy elements
February	Initiate consultation with comanagers on policy development	
March	Submit draft policy elements for public comment	
March 16	Public Zoom outreach meeting	
April 5 May 5	Public comment period ends for DRAFT policy elements	Extended 30 days to May 5th
April late May	Summarize public comments on draft policy elements	Distribute to advisory group
April June 9	4th meeting of advisory group	Discuss public comments
Late April -Feb	Complete initial draft policy	
June 24/25	Commission Briefing	Briefing on draft policy and public comments received & commission guidance
June -July	2nd Draft of policy	Possible 2nd Zoom work session
June -July	5th meeting of advisory group	Review 2nd draft and accept appropriate comments for final
August 6-7	Commission Briefing and Public Hearing	Public Comment on Policy and Commission guidance
August	Final Policy and SEPA	
September 17-18	Commission Briefing and Decision	Staff recommendation and commission decision
Late-September	Final Advisory Group Meeting	Final policy decision and ad-hoc Advisory Group close out



Tribal Review & Input

- Feb 24th letter sent to all 29 WA tribes (tribal chairs and natural resource directors).
- Puget Sound (1)
 - Policy may be based on speculation that increased angler effort and harvest will increase prey for Orca
 - Increased daily limits on streams may cause increased impacts to resources and harm to habitat
 - More firm guidance for administrative decisions
- Columbia River (2)
 - Doesn't provide a clear policy position or guidance
 - Needs to consider best available information
 - Input from co-managers



Public Review & Input

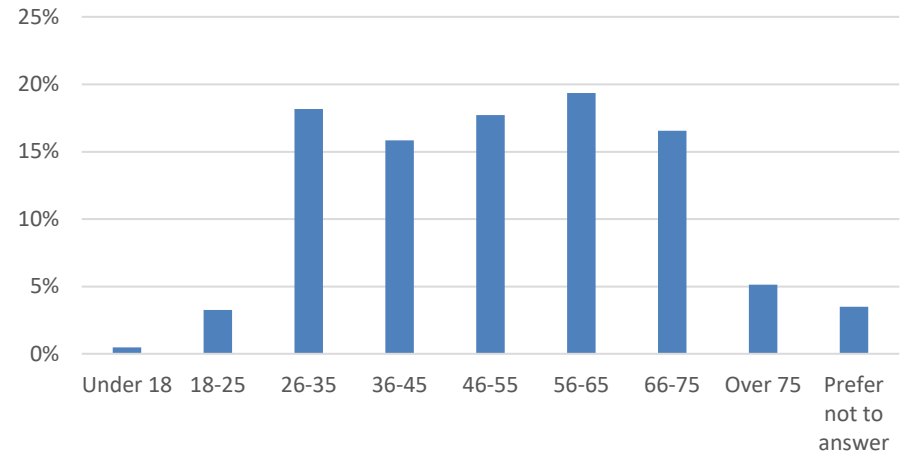
- Online review and input March 8th – April 5th
 - Extended to May 5th
 - 456 Participants
 - 11,936 responses
 - 1,672 comments
 - + 11 letters
- March 16th Teams Live Q&A session 6-8pm
 - Lightly attended (12 registered, 33 anonymous)
 - Received and responded to over 100 questions



Demographics

- Ages 26-75 equally represented

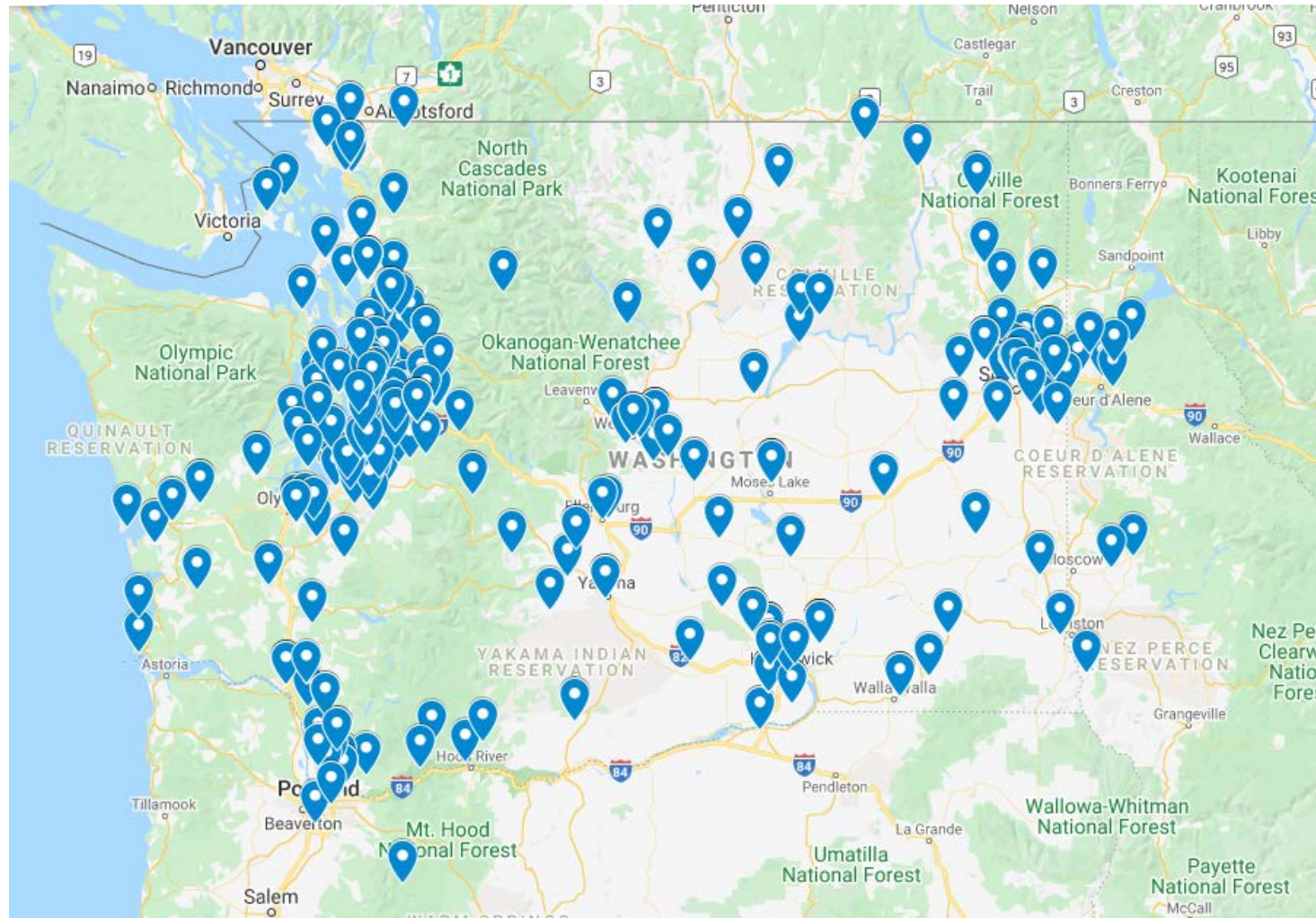
Age Grouping of Respondents



- 98% participants from PNW



Demographics



Policy/Survey Design

Six Policy Elements

1. Population Management
2. Fishing Regulations
3. Introduction/Supplementation/Translocation
4. Habitat
5. Illegal Introduction
6. Targeted Control



Policy/Survey Design

Six Waterbody types

Rivers, Streams and Beaver Ponds

1. With native anadromous fish
2. With native species of concern
3. Without native species of concern

Lakes, Ponds, and Reservoirs

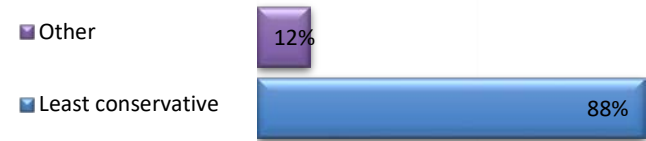
4. With native anadromous fish
5. With native species of concern
6. Limited or no connectivity to anadromous waters, or waters with no anadromy



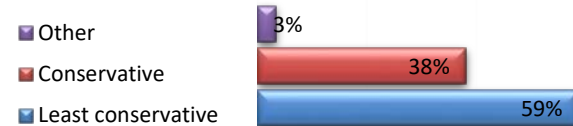
General Survey Results

- A lot of consistency to how options were chosen
- Both “comments” and “Other” options very consistent
- Hard topic, definite polarization
- The common ground message from participants was the use of science

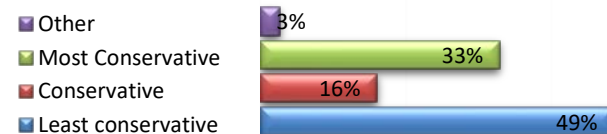
Elements with 1 Option 14 Questions



Elements with 2 Options 8 Questions



Elements with 3 Options 14 Questions



Summary of “Other”

- Will promulgate rules that protect native anadromous fish and enhance NNGF where appropriate
- Promulgate rules that reduce impacts to salmonids and native species of concern
- WDFW will manage to create balance between native and non-native fish
- Prioritize the needs of native fishes
- Stock native species
- Restore native populations
- Remove limits on NNGF
- NNGF and salmonids / native fish should carry equal management emphasis
- We oppose habitat policies that would direct WDFW to manage or modify habitat in a way that benefits non-native species.
- WDFW will provide support for or undertake habitat enhancement or restoration projects for the benefit of non-native game fish
- WDFW will perform localized control of non-native gamefish to meet conservation and or fish management objectives
- Only control NNGF where major impact is documented

- Utilize best science to inform balanced management practices



Summary of Comments

- Manage fish with the best science, not politics
- Nothing in this policy supports, or is positive for NNGF
- WDFW doesn't support bass/walleye anglers
- Stop destroying fisheries, should be growing them
- Viable opportunity besides trout and salmon
- Native species are struggling, should be priority
- Non-native are a great opportunity, but high risk to native species
- Remove all non-native fish by any means possible





Questions?