

North of Falcon Policy Commission Briefing December 14-16, 2023 Meeting

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**Current 2019-2023 North of Falcon
Policy C-3608
Expires December 31, 2023**

Purpose

- Review changes in revised draft of policy
- Summarize public comment received to date
- Seek Commission guidance and public comment
- Revisit schedule for policy review



Policy Review Process

- October 2023 Commission briefing:
 - Briefed Commission and sought guidance on modifications
 - Received initial public comment
- December 2023
 - Briefing on public comment received, provide potential revisions to draft policy in a revised draft
 - Additional public comment
 - Additional Commission guidance for revised draft
 - New revised draft posted online for public comment after meeting
- January 2024
 - Briefing on additional public comment received
 - Commission considers adoption of revised policy



Modifications in draft policy

- Housekeeping changes
 - Updates to effective dates, titles of cross-referenced policies and plans, virtual meetings to replace teleconferences
- Removed reference to 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Project, retained core principles for policy implementation
- Removed bullet instructing Department to seek access to unutilized portions of treaty harvest allocations



Modifications in draft policy

- Revised guidance for providing fishing opportunity for Puget Sound-origin pink and chum salmon
- Adding sentence to in-season management section stating that intent to provide predictable and stable seasons will be considered when making in-season modifications to recreational fisheries
- Added section on reporting directing Department to make easily accessible online the many reports that are already being produced to meet various requirements, and to produce and make available summaries of pre- and post-season results from the Chinook and coho fishery planning models



Public input received – Opening section

- Add references to Puget Sound Salmon Management Plan and Comprehensive Coho Management Plan to opening paragraph
 - The Puget Sound Salmon Management Plan falls under the umbrellas of both US v Washington and other pertinent co-manager agreements, which are already referenced
 - While the PSSMP still provides important guidance and principles, there are many pieces of it that are outdated and/or not followed strictly the way they were in the 1980's, as technology and the salmon management and co-management landscapes have changed over the nearly four decades that have passed since it was signed.



Public input received – Opening section

- Add references to Puget Sound Salmon Management Plan and Comprehensive Coho Management Plan to opening paragraph
 - The Comprehensive Coho Management Plan falls under other pertinent agreements and still sets the basis for management of Puget Sound coho stocks
 - Comp Coho Plan is still followed, although abundance/escapement breakpoints and maximum allowable exploitation rates have been updated over time
 - Fisheries were planned for exploitation rates below their maximum allowable for stocks at critical abundances immediately after the coho collapse of 2015, consistent with Comp Coho Plan
 - Co-managers used a more conservative approach for Snohomish coho stock after it was declared overfished through PFMC process, increasing the abundance threshold that allowed fishing at a higher exploitation rate (this approach was adopted by PFMC in the stock rebuilding plan)



Public input received – General Fishery Management

- Direct WDFW to provide estimates of anticipated harvests, angler trips and the net economic value of fishery alternatives during NOF
 - Anticipated harvests/impacts are estimated and provided for alternatives considered throughout NOF
 - Ability to predict angler trips varies widely between areas and fisheries
 - WDFW has provided projections of angler trips for various Puget Sound marine fishery alternatives in the past, with the caveats that actual angler trips can be extremely variable, and affected by factors beyond the control of fishery managers
 - Puget Sound freshwater angler trip data is more limited, making projections even more difficult, although new freshwater monitoring programs should improve quantity and quality of freshwater trip data



Public input received – General Fishery Management

- Direct WDFW to provide estimates of anticipated harvests, angler trips and the net economic value of fishery alternatives during NOF
 - There are studies that have generated general estimates of “net economic value” per angler trip for salmon fisheries (TCW Economics 2008), but we do not have the tools or ability to provide meaningful estimates of differences in “net economic value” for all the fishery alternatives considered during the North of Falcon process
 - We do not have the ability to predict angler trips for the majority of fisheries developed during NOF, or to predict net economic value.



Public input received – Pacific Ocean Fishery Management

- Delete reference to National Standards
 - National Standard Guidelines are required by the Magnuson-Stevens Act and are principles that must be followed in all federal fishery management plans to ensure sustainable and responsible fishery management
- Add language directing WDFW to establish ocean exploitation rates consistent with stock conservation objectives, manage fisheries consistent with escapement goals for wild stocks and broodstock management objectives, and to provide fair and equitable allocation of harvest impacts between ocean and inland water fisheries
 - Fisheries must be planned and implemented consistent with conservation goals for wild stocks and broodstock management objectives in all areas, and policy already captures this
 - Finding fair and equitable allocation of harvest impacts between fisheries must also be done across all areas, and is alluded to in other parts of current policy



Public input received – In-Season Management

- Add language directing WDFW to structure seasons to increase certainty and minimize in-season fishery modifications
 - WDFW staff share this general goal of providing seasons that can be implemented as planned and works towards this with the public during every North of Falcon
 - Predicting how much fishing opportunity can be provided in an area and month within the planned, limited allowable impacts is extremely difficult due to variations in fish abundance and distribution, run timing, angler effort and angler success rates
 - The safest way to avoid emergency closures is to schedule shorter duration fisheries, which can have additional affects including:
 - Increasing angler effort during initial opening
 - Increasing the likelihood of requiring in-season fishery modifications to provide additional openings if harvest or impacts remain available after initial opening



Public input received – In-Season Management

- Change language to direct department to include **all** in-season updates and **all** potential modifications to fisheries based on in-season updates in the List of Agreed Fisheries
 - In-season update tools that are agreed as formal, quantitative update models during North of Falcon can be included in the LOAF
 - There are numerous in-season update tools that are not used as exact quantitative models by the co-managers but are used along with other models and information to provide qualitative insights into run status for individual stocks relative to pre-season expectations
 - Potential modifications to fisheries could include closures, additional open periods, reduced or increased daily limits, or similar measures, but detailed prescription of all potential modifications for each individual fishery is not practical or productive



Public input received – In-Season Management

- Direct WDFW to evaluate potential use of data from Puget Sound marine sport fishery sampling programs for in-season updates
 - Data from mixed stock marine hook and line fisheries have shown little utility for use for in-season update models
 - Even if data provided some utility for projecting aggregate abundance of Puget Sound stocks, it would not provide usable information on individual hatchery or wild stocks usable for in-season management decisions



Public input received – Reporting

- Multiple comments on reporting performance in achieving conservation and fishery objectives, pre-season and post-season estimated harvests, stock impacts, state-tribal sharing, etc.



Other public input received

- Eliminate direction to the Department to include North of Falcon participants as observers in appropriate state/tribal meetings
- Provide the public opportunity for input into the List of Agreed Fisheries prior to its finalization
- Engage with advisors to identify realistic and measurable Puget Sound recreational salmon fishery management objectives
- Update SKRW intent that is specific to Puget Sound fisheries and add public involvement



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Questions/Guidance?

