Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fish Program

Columbia River Commercial Advisory Group

May 15th, 2018

WDFW Ridgefield Office- 5525 S 11th St, Ridgefield WA 98642

Attendance:

CRCAG Members:

Bryce Devine, Kent Martin, Robert Sudar, Les Clark, Bill Hunsinger, Greg Johnson, Jim Wells, Jim Coleman

WDFW Staff:

Ryan Lothrop, Cindy LeFleur, Tim Sippel, Myrtice Dobler (note taker)

Public:

Blair Peterson

Purpose of meeting:

Advisory Group/Public Comprehensive Review of Columbia River Basin Salmon Management Policy C-3620 (2013-17)

Meeting Agenda:

Time	Topic
10:00-10:20	Introductions/ Agenda/ Review update and timeline
10:20-11:45	Review Category A responses
11:45-12:45	Review Category B responses
12:45-1:00	Wrap- up/ What's next

Meeting Notes:

Introductions and review of agenda

Reviewed where to find information from meetings and the Fish Committee online.

Timeline

- We are at May advisory meeting.
- Next is June 14th- Public meeting with fish committee
- July 31- Next Columbia River Commercial Advisory Group meeting
- August- Fish Committee meeting to attempt to finalize review doc.
    - Allows 2 weeks to finish review before presentation to commission in Sept.
- We hope to have joint commission with ODFW- nothing scheduled yet

We've broken up the document into theme sections/chapters. Currently we have and "A" section of completed items and a "B" section of in progress.

Intention for this meeting

- Share what we have, receive comments, questions and feedback on the analysis.
    - Thinks it went well, would have liked a stronger stand on some positions.
    - Our (staff's) job
        - provide information, would like to hear where we could have been stronger
    - Better, fairer allocation. Strong fishery comes from strong commercial fishery, raise fish.

Question 11

Provide definition of selective gear and what is a selective fishery. Make selective gear definitions more black and white on what gear is or isn't. Difference between catch and release and selectivity.

Selective Gear (Questions 11, 12 and 33)

We need a clear definition of selectivity. It is currently confusing. Confusing and misleading and question on accuracy of numbers, issue with terms used. Discussion on selectivity of seines: we need to provide hard data on seines.

Selective vs. Non-selective (Question 11)

- We are selective because of time and area.
- Giving protection for a weaker stock.
- Selectivity is a confusing thing – alt gear is not selective.
    - The Commission waiting for definitive answer. Someone needs to state functional gear
    - Commission needs to hear agreement between what CRCAG says and what staff defines.
    - Selectivity is different from catch and release.
    - Avoidance is #1 thing for document.
    - Calling it (Zone 4-5 fishery) non-selective for Chinook makes it sound bad. We are trying to catch Chinook.
    - Early March. We could fish selectively with our gillnets.
    - Approach is confusing and misleading.
    - On analysis Q11- "this guiding principle is coming from…" did not come from workshop.
    - Members of CRCAG requested that we include a citation for the governor's statement
    - Felt it was not a collaborative decision – the Policy development/workgroup process
    - Saying that seines are selective: data shows differently.
    - We need statement in this report – seines either work or they don't. Make that statement clearer. And Gillnets can be fished selectively

Alternative Gear (Questions 11, 12, 13, 19, and 33)
Would like more discussion on pound net- requested meeting with Blair Peterson
Suggested WDFW summarize (in 5 or so bullets) what's working and what's not

- Hammer on the fact that alt gear has not been developed.
    - Make it clear that this hasn't work
- Never given accurate data on seine fishery or sport hooking mortality. Why don't you have hard facts?
    - Sport hooking mortality- never been checked
    - Seines haven't fished 2 years
- Tooth nets. Bought them, made the investment
- Time, area, and mesh works. We need to go back
- Get back to the facts
    - Perfected tooth net and didn't have to put any fish in the live box, didn't catch any steelhead
    - Feels commercial fishermen have done a good job
    - They didn't get any credit for it
- No fishery was designed for catch and release
    - Trying to design it with tools we have- some work, some don't
- Pound Net. Purpose of NOAA study was to catch steelhead. That's why it had such a high catch. But had low mortality.
    - New pound net – don't know cost
    - Questions on feasibility
    - Request for further discussion was made- will set up a future meeting with Blair where he can go into more detail
- Is the plan working?
    - We don't have any viable options for alt gear
    - Sport priority- not working
        - License sales?
        - Angler trips
        - Economics
        - Fish caught
    - Make 5 or so bullets of what's working, and what's not

Select Areas/ SAFE (Question 8, 15, and 22)
Problems with retailers stocking enough gear based on select areas
Fishermen camping out to save the best spots

- WA has not been able to develop any new SAFE fisheries
- Show numbers for SAFE
    - What are catches now and compare to 10-year average before plan
    - Hours spent to catch fish
- Select Areas don't work for entire fleet

    - Top four places in Young's bay- 1 guy controls it
- WA doesn't have any Select Areas
- Select Area Brights – released in Oregon SAFE
    - Highest money fish for Select Areas
- OR and WA Select Areas are different as night and day
    - Cathlamet channel didn't work- no homing scent
    - Not enough room for fisherman
        - Quality is down. Fish for public should have best quality and stocks
- Tremendous loss (damage) of gear in Select Areas
- Gear is based on Select Areas, but retailers don't buy that much
    - Two months before opener they're out of gear
    - Net availability is not what it was

Observers (Question 27)

- Insurance issues on boats (WA) - belief that they were protected from observers injury
- What did we get
    - Enforcement cracking down on us
    - Still hear "we need more data"

Policy

Commercial advisors want to recommend to the commission that this plan is not working

- Opening statement for commission
    - In general, that commercial advisors conclude that this plan is not working.
        - Wants that point to be made
- Put policy in without the science. Did it backwards
- Defining problem to Commission
    - Built on pillars of what was supposed to work
        - SAFE
        - Alt gear
    - Select area (Q22)
        - WA fishers not engaging
        - Not economic
    - OR select area
        - 9.5% of landing from WA fisherman
        - Went up initially now going down
    - What the WA commission has done with Policy
        - No spring Chinook
        - No sturgeon
        - No summer chinook
        - Fall chinook
            - 60% of 2007
        - Supposed to have SAFE areas and alt gear
    - Line out the facts

        - No additional WA SAFE areas
        - Tried in Cathlamet Channel – didn't work
        - No science in document, no data
- Goals of policy were not justified by the science
    - Improve conservation
        - No evidence that conservation has been improved
    - Prioritize Rec. Fishing
        - Already prioritized.
        - OR shows little bit of improvement
        - Angler trips are flat or down
        - Increase license sales – license sales flat
- Select Areas
    - Get data on OR select area release and catch
    - Increase releases in OR
        - Couldn't do it
    - Tried to improve main stem
        - Only 20% more for spring
        - Part of what was promised from earlier working groups

<u>Allocation</u> (Questions 6, 7, 30, 32, 34, 35, and 36)
Discussion of allocation and the effect on the fishery- concern over 20% allocation
Asked WDFW staff to tell consequence of brights and wild
Encouraged WDFW to defend the science

- Impact splits
    - Cannot live with the 20% allocation
    - Predators are eating the fish
    - Can't run mainstem fishery and Select Areas in spring with 20%
    - Fall will go 20% with only selective gear, but no selective gear to use
- Issue is not alternative gears: it's that all the fish go to sport anglers
- Tell consequence – brights and wild – means low mark rate for selective fisheries
- Defend the science
- Three choices
    - Pull plug on hatchery production
    - Let commercial fishery catch more fish
    - Bring tribes down river to catch hatchery surplus

<u>Economics</u> (Questions 8, 37, and 38)
- Loss of economic sustenance is impacting the local communities
- Economics of Select Areas – trying to make most of Select Areas but they are not economical
- Buyers – WA Select Areas are not good for WA buyers and WA buyers cannot buy in OR without OR buyers license

- Economic impacts have been masked by an increase in prices and abundance
- Fishermen and buyers having a portfolio of fisheries. Last year less than a month of buying – used to be 10 months. Fishermen fish in the mainstem, SAFE, crab fishery and Alaska to build their portfolio
- The commercial fishery used to be a stepping stone fishery, Fairly inexpensive to start, but there's no interest from young fishermen
- There is a cost of having to put money and resources into a variety of gear.
- Selling the business is difficult now because there is no value left in it. People cannot afford to repair boats. No young guy can buy it. Not a good investment. No future in it the way it is.
    - $6-$7 thousand is what license are worth
    - Was about $10K when it Policy started
    - Has been as high as $45K
    - With fishing we've had could have been $20-25K
- Request for harvest matrixes with allocation shares – the way it used to be – worked well
- Hatchery cuts are occurring because people can't catch fish
- Even with big runs we came short of predictions for harvest

<u>Buybacks</u> (Question 18)

- What was the intention of the buybacks?
- Nothing benefits
    - All it does is get rid of the gill nets – cannot tell where sport has benefited
    - Lower harvest of food fish. Is this what was intended by the legislature?
- Only talking about buy out due to Policy
- Policy destroyed fishery

<u>Logbooks</u> (Question 25)

- Commercial Advisory encouraged use of log books for guides. OR and WA have never put anything for limited entry guide boats. There isn't enough room for the amount of people going fishing

<u>Concurrency</u> (Questions 16, and 40)

- Advisors expressed concern over lack of concurrency. One policy for both states.

<u>Question 25:</u>

- Feels log books would help fill data gaps. Encouraged log books for guides.

<u>Question 17</u>

- Improve information availability about commercial fisheries. Feels there is a lack of availability for locals business to sell Columbia River salmon. Acknowledge lack of information on commercial fishery online. We need to inform people that there is a

commercial fishery. If you can advertise to sell the sport fishery why not commercial? The answer shouldn't be that you have to catch your own fish to eat.

- Issue with 'Eat Wild' flyer. WDFW Marketing did the flyer with intention to sell licenses. Frustrating to keep trying to get information to consumers
    - Monterey Bay Aquarium is where seafood information comes from – sustainability seafood. Downgraded Columbia River coho from yellow to red.
- Lack of availability for local CR salmon
    - Restaurateur spoke at commission meeting in Astoria. Cannot feed them Columbia River salmon.

Question 18

- Concerns over how the value of the buybacks would be measured. When you decrease our numbers we get weaker.
    - Value. Look at what they were worth, not now that their economies are devastated. When Policy was initiated value was estimated.

Question 22

- SAFE Areas
    - 350,000 Chinook smolts were to be added. We didn't release all of the fish that were planned for
        - Only way Select Areas work is for spring and fall
        - Balance economics with production cost. Not going to pencil out
    - Expansion of select areas can also mean additional impacts needed to prosecute
- Economics of SAFE
    - Give numbers and compared with numbers in the past
        - Show money put into getting fish out and then how many come back. Commission thinks releasing must be harvesting- not happening
    - Cost of raising compared to returns. These numbers should be impressed to commission.
        - New predation is occurring. Commission needs to know. It's a huge unknown.
    - Young's Bay is averaging 4 fish/ fisherman
    - Number of participants doesn't count those who didn't catch anything
        - Only get data from sales

Question 27

- Share results from monitoring- and describe what the information means
- Told WDFW to be more aggressive in your own Science
- Is the analysis saying what it needs to say, i.e. can you use 8-9"gear in Zone 4-5?
    - Make the step for the commission to describe what the information means. Be more aggressive in your own Science. Be clear and precise – these aren't kill nets. Used appropriately it's can be good for harvest

Question 28:

- Concern over who was running and funding the Cowlitz study. That study is not where the bulk of the fish are being caught
    - Fish there are a lot more resistant to hooking and handling than in the Columbia
    - Be careful not to apply it everywhere
- Commercial advisors requested more information on Mt. Hood Environmental. Would like those involved (with Mt. Hood Environmental) to be shared with Commission.

Question 6:

- The allocation table is misleading in terms of how much they are fishing. Asked for catch data. Commercial advisors requested to be involved in the agreement discussion with Colville Tribe.
    - Concerned about table. Table is actual sharing of harvest. Does not reflect escapement goals being doubled.
        - Colville's are not catching share
        - Sports can't catch their share
    - It is not like the spring. In this case it's about how willing the Colville Tribe is to fish
    - Are you giving them enough fish to catch allocation? If so, why aren't they catching them?
        - We used to get a kick back from unharvested Colville fish
    - Violating terms of last Colville agreement
        - Obligated to maintain commercial fishery

Other Topics Discussed:

- Organization of CRCAG- Discussion on roles, membership, and participation.
- Discussion of sturgeon how fishing was allowed in lower river in the winter/spring but not anymore.

Action Items:

WDFW staff:

- Go through comments and implement them in the Policy Review Document for CRCAG review
- Schedule a meeting with Blair where he can provide a more detailed presentation- perhaps September

CRCAG:

- Review of meeting minutes
- If you have additional comments- please share them with us

Next Meeting:
We went as late as we could to complete the review document. That took us to the end of July.

Date: July 31, 2018	Time: 10am-1pm	Location: WDFW Region 5 Office
Time	Topic	
10:00-10:20	Introductions/ Agenda/ Review update and timeline	
10:20-12:00	Review Category A responses	
12:00-12:45	Review remaining Category B responses	
12:45-1:00	Wrap- up/ What's next	

Comprehensive Review of the Columbia River Basin Salmon Management Policy C-3620

Policy Review Themes

Recreational	
Question 9	Recreational priority
Question 23	Barbless hooks
Question 24	Barbless hook exemptions
Question 25	Logbooks

Commercial	
Question 17	MSC Certification
Question 18	Buyback
Question 22	New SAFE areas
Question 27	2017 monitoring results
Question 28	Funding for release mortality rate

Tribal	
Question 6	Colville allocation
Question 7	Wanapum subsistence

Allocation	
Question 30	Spring Chinook allocation
Question 31	Spring Chinook buffer
Question 32	Spring Chinook allcoation sport
Question 33	Summer Chinook allocation
Question 34	Summer Chinook allocation- above PRD
Question 35	Summer Chnook allocation- below PRD
Question 36	Allocation sockeye, fall Chin, coho

Alt Gear	
Question 10	Gill nets phased out
Question 11	Definition of non-selective gill nets
Question 12	Alternative gear development
Question 13	Alternative gear implementation
Question 14	Alternative gear incentives
Question 19	Alternative gear progress
Question 33	Alternative gear results

Management	
Question 1	Conservation
Question 3	Target stocks
Question 4	Mark-selective fisheries
Question 5	Predation
Question 16	Concurrency
Question 26	Outreach and monitoring
Question 29	Management tools
Question 40	Concurrent regulation

Economics	
Question 2	Economic enhancements
Question 8	Well-being and stability
Question 15	SAFE economically enhanced
Question 20	Opportunities- transition phase
Question 21	Opportunities- long term
Question 37	Economic expectations
Question 38	Correct course- economics
Question 39	Reconsideration of policy- expectations