

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fish Program  
**Columbia River Commercial Advisory Group**  
July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018  
WDFW Ridgefield Office- 5525 S 11<sup>th</sup> St, Ridgefield WA 98642

**Attendance:**

CRCAG Members: Les Clark, Bryce Devine, Kent Martin, Robert Sudar, Jim Coleman, Ken Wirkkala, Greg Johnson- on the phone

WDFW Staff: Bill Tweit, Cindy LeFleur, Ryan Lothrop, Myrtice Dobler

Public: None

**Meeting Agenda:**

Time	Topic
10:00- 10:15	Introductions/ Agenda/ Review update and timeline
10:15- 10:45	Economics
10:45- 11:15	Allocation
11:15- 12:00	Alternative Gear
12:00-12:15	Concurrency
12:15- 12:30	Selective Fisheries
12:30- 12:45	Q1 supplemental: conservation benefits
12:45- 1:00	Wrap-up/ What's next

**Meeting Notes:**

**Introductions/ Agenda/ Review update and timeline**

Directive to provide final report by the end of August. What we are covering will be sent to the Fish Committee by the end of the day for the August 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ian Courter, with Mt. Hood Environmental is going to be the consultant who will work to summarize our report.

One member brought up submitting an addendum from interested parties. If the advisory group members would like to write up a document we could attach that as part of the advisory group comment section.

Concerns were expressed over how political the management in. Many in the group believe that the best sport fishery sport fishermen will ever have is when we all raise fish together for everyone.

Advisory Group (AG) wants to make sure that the final report is simplified. Discussion on how the detailed analysis is needed so that the simplification would be accurate.

## **Economics**

### Question 2- Economic Enhancements

- Would like to note that sport decreased even though they got 80%- greater priority
- Discussion on the pre-policy choice of years. We used 2010-12 partly because that's what OR used. AG feels adding 2009 would make a difference in catch size because of a large coho catch year and Policy development during 2009-11.
- Discussion on mark selective fisheries for sport fishing, how it happened and some of the effects of that management
  - Sports have an opportunity to fish in the tributaries- while commercial have to stay where they are
- Modeled higher impact rate (15%) on Snake River wild- past fall we ended up at 28-30% usage (constrained by B steelhead). But there were no more Snake River wild available- this is likely where we'll land if this continues.
  - Impacts coming out of the recreational fishery
  - Concern of moving in these lower run years- won't create commercial values as expected because the sharing won't be there.
  - Modeling assumed all kinds of things that didn't happen. Run size, price per pound, total harvest of fish.
- When you restrict any fishery with opportunity it can't thrive and threatens sustainability

### Question 15- Enhancements to Select Area fisheries

- There are lots of numbers, what is your conclusion of this section? - AG would like staff to find a way to simplify the information.
- AG have a concern over saying that the SAFE areas were successful it will lead the commission to an incorrect conclusion.
- Future of the SAFE areas- pHos issues
  - If we're losing the most valuable stock for that fishery, the commission should be reminded of that.
- URB contributes more to other fishermen
- There was a discussion about BPA's position on funding select areas- will figure out more in September
  - Phone call today between OR, WA, and BPA- we know what our position was but not the results of the call.

### Synopsis

- You make point that 3 million was not a hard target, but a measure. This should also be pointed out in the staff summary. We also can't judge success on one year's success but whether the trend matches what was predicted.
- The data at a whole seems to indicate that there's not a relation between sport and commercial fisheries. Taking fish from the commercials does not add to recreational. Increase in angler days do not directly transfer to the shift in impact.

- There were comments on wording of synopsis; it seems some items stated more clearly in intro.

Table Specific Comments

Table 2A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not feel like the trips declined due to run-size- will be discussed later</li> </ul>
Table 2D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on the runsize adjustment you don't see much improvement</li> <li>• AG feels that table makes sense</li> </ul>
Table 2F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggests staff look at average number of days in pre policy seasons to see if they gained anything.</li> </ul>
Table 2H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's hard to have commercial fishery when it's based on impacts. Often by the time everything comes through there are no impacts left. The group would like an adjustment in the impact split.</li> <li>• Discussion on the experiment of purse seines. It doesn't matter how many fish a trap catches it's about how many fish they're allowed to keep.</li> <li>• Needs to support a high capitol high volume approach- would like this to be reiterated to the commission.</li> <li>• Questions on inflation and how that's accounted for</li> </ul>
Table 2I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seine net fishery's cost to gillnet fishery is that reflected?</li> <li>• AG noted that graphs don't address what it takes to get these fish- the loss involved in expense. The cost to operate the fisheries will not be included as staff are not economists. Travel to Select Areas (or Zone 4-5) is costly for all except those who live nearby.</li> <li>• Not all catch is created equal based on effort/operational cost to catch fish <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Youngs Bay, one fisherman mentioned that he fished 4 months every week and came up with almost 100 fish by then end of it- but it's different from being able to fish closer to where he lived.</li> <li>○ Difference between fishing 3 nights vs. 1 night</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Will they see the whole picture- pre policy</li> <li>• Doesn't think what's happening there now isn't much different from what was happening 10 years ago. SAFE was producing good runs of fish prior to policy and smolt releases now aren't different in most cases from what they were in the past - only a 10-20% increase at most in some runs and declines in others.</li> </ul>
Table 15A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These were release goals- doesn't mean they'll come back</li> </ul>
Table 15C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another place 2009 data is important- 2014 catch dominates everything, 2009 was an 80,000 catch year in the Select areas (another peak coho year)</li> <li>• Lots of juvenile fish released does not translate into significant adult catches</li> </ul>
Table 15I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tributaries are select areas for recreational- not fair to look at only main stem for recs.</li> <li>• With basin rec. catch numbers included, rec. catches will expand dramatically.</li> <li>• Select Areas are not filling any holes for WA fishermen- There's not enough area to fish, for example Deep River would be too crowded</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The difference between states- WA license holders don't participate in a high level in these areas. OR solution is not working well for WA.</li> </ul>
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**Allocation**

The advisory group suggested providing not only the end numbers but what was supposed to happen and what changed in the season. For example, 31 and 32 higher than anticipated sharing was from forgone impacts given to commercial fishery and this is something that commercial fisheries should be using (same thing in the summer).

Question 35- Summer Chinook Allocation, below PRD

- AG requested a note explaining that should we exceed prescribed sharing- was part of foregone catch – we can almost always catch our share, sport often cannot especially when fishing selectively in a relatively small run with a large wild component (like summer returns)
- Discussion on using the percentages and how to reflect the accurate story

Question 36- Allocation sockeye, fall Chinook, coho

- Didn't fish for coho partly due to the lack of URB impacts in 2016 and lack of steelhead impacts in 2017. There were fish to harvest but not impacts available to prosecute fisheries.
- Would like to explore what is it costing the state (economically) due to the rigid impacts

Table Specific Comments

Table 30B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include what they were supposed to get</li> <li>• 42% was from when the recs couldn't use- in season management not policy. Share the whole narrative</li> </ul>
Table 32B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A description of season is important to explain the final numbers</li> </ul>
Table 33B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shows how the whole river is being shared- this looks good</li> <li>• Testing was done- but unsuccessful</li> <li>• Too many sockeye and steelhead handled.</li> <li>• A discussion of where commercial numbers came from</li> </ul>
Table 35A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should have a column of unused catch- Show percent of allocation used next to % share.</li> </ul>
Table 36A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still missing actual sharing</li> </ul>
Table 36B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a place where we can show what the model assumed? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assumption that sport wouldn't use allocation of URB</li> <li>○ Fishery was modeled with commercial higher.</li> <li>○ Commercial will not be able to achieve economic value</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Alternative Gear**

Tangle nets are a good alternative gear for Spring, but we don't have enough impacts to use them- better to use in late May, rather than give up our Spring fishery. Tangle nets for spring

Chinook is an alternative gear, it was used very successfully, and we were still shut out of any spring Chinook fishery in the mainstem long-term via the Policy.

Question 10- Gill nets phased out

- There was discussion on what was meant by ‘evaluation.’ Some did not feel that there was an evaluation.
- Some items that could fall in the category are
  - Steelhead- industry and staff
  - OR evaluations
  - Models portraying if we didn’t use 4-5 and went to different zones

Question 11- Definition of non-selective gill nets

- AG was pleased with comprehensive analysis.

Question 12- Alternative Gear Development

- AG requested staff add summary covering seines and tangle nets and note economic threshold
- There was a question on the ‘fair’ listing on the tangle nets release conditions?- table taken from OR, table was developed earlier in the process
  - Would argue released in good condition not fair.
- Tangle nets missing in analysis portion

Question 13- Alternative Gear Implementation

- Purse seine in Columbia River discussion
  - Why they aren’t being used and will that change?
- The AG would like to have potential gear conflicts included
- Scale is important- There’s not enough fish to operate gear like this

Question 14- Alternative Gear Incentives

- Members said they do not see what’s spent on research as an incentive
- How much fish you want to catch compared to runsizes - why spend money on gear that might not even be allotted a fishery

Table Specific Comments

Table 19A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fish caught by seines were not as desirable (size, quality, only allowed to keep clipped fish, higher level of tules)</li> </ul>
Table 19 A/B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited effort on the Seine fishery (Table 19 A and B) concerned on the accuracy of total #. Some zones were not effective for beach seining or purse seining.</li> <li>• 2014 many fishermen went gillnet fishing for coho</li> </ul>
Figure 19.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not accurate in study period</li> <li>• Timeframe used to asses mortality rates (had some initial issues due to human error)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We need to fish on volume- will need to evaluate performance earlier when peak is)</li></ul>
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### **Concurrency**

This has been out for a while, there was a quick review. The general idea of the document is encouraging the commission to fix the non-concurrency.

### **Selective Fisheries**

We were asked what Selective Fishing is, that's the goal of this document. Advisors were asked to check and see if this does what they think it should and they agreed.

### **Q1 supplemental: conservation benefits**

The advisory group suggested staff add to summary paragraph.

There was a discussion on hook and release mortality studies.

- Willamette study- Spring Chinook study
  - Higher than what's being used in Columbia
- The study is over 20 years old, no recent hooking mortality studies for what's really going on and the sport fishery and they are getting more of the allocation.
- Concern whether same gear is being used.
- Review release mortality rates during spring Chinook studies 15 years ago.

### **Other Topics**

Discussion on monitors on boats and where we are- mostly where we were before.

Predator mortality- we know it's going on but don't have a way to estimate it. The fisheries aren't being held responsible.

Would like to have a statement of this is what policy was supposed to do

- Re-shift allocation
- Replace gillnets with alternative gear

### **Pound net update:**

We don't have a signed contract or finalized plan. But are still actively engaged in finalization. The primary objective is to look at commercial viability, not mortality, and will do stock comp of steelhead (at Idaho's request).

This will be done as a test fishery to determine commercial viability. This means Chinook, coho and steelhead ESA impacts are coming out of research category- separate from fishing category (cannot trade back and forth)

The current time frame is August 15 through October 31. But we plan to go until we run out of impacts or funding. The estimated start up and take down (non-fishing) costs are around 40-50K. At this time the study will be using the same site Blare Petersen has been using. We believe that the data is more valuable than the revue received from the fish. For sale of the fish, we are not required to put it out to bid, but required to get fair market value. Picking the buyers are up to us, but finding someone to buy the relatively small amounts of fish is tricky.

**Action Items:**

WDFW staff:

- Update Policy Review documents with input from CRCAG

CRCAG:

- Review documents (especially selective fisheries) and share any comments
- Review meeting notes for finalization

**Next Meeting:**

No CRCAG meeting scheduled. But you are invited to attend the Fish Committee meeting on August 9<sup>th</sup>.