

PSRFEF Oversight Committee Meeting Minutes

September 30, 2020, 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Join by Microsoft Teams

564-999-2000 United States, Olympia (Toll)

Conference ID: 824 971 467#

Committee members present

Gregg Williams (GW), Mark Riedesel (MR), Mike Gilchrist (MG), Dave Puki (DP), Don Freeman (DF), Norm Reinhardt (NR), Dave Knutzen (DK), Wayne Harmond (WH), Art Tachell (AT), Dan Witzcak (DW), Troy McKelvey (TM)

WDFW staff present

Mark Baltzell (MB), Leah Snyder (LS), Raquel Crosier (RC), Kirt Hughes (KH), Nate Pamplin (NP), Hailey Rosenthal (HR), Anja Huff (AH), Gary Marston (GM)

Introduction

Review Agenda – Motion to approve-, Seconded-

Review Minutes – Meeting Minutes –motion to approve, seconded

Program Update

Staffing Updates:

- Welcome Hailey!
- PS Salmon Manager position- Previously Mark’s position. We will be interviewing eight candidates that we will be initially interviewing.
- Willapa/Grays Policy position- Chad Herring has moved onto a different policy position, and we hope to have the PS Salmon Manager hired before this position.
- PS Rec Fishery Biologist/PSRFE
- Agency positions being held vacant
 - Planning/Modeling/ESA Response
 - RD for R2 position
 - R6 Hatchery Ops position

Summer Fishery Updates:

- Area 5-Early fishing good led to early closure. A lot of coho encountered in fishery.
- Area 7- Season pretty much as expected. Shorter August season.
- Areas 9, 10, and 11 all had below average catch rates and no area met their respective quota
- Area 12, really slow fishing and low hatchery returns to George Adams and Hoodsport.
- Early indications are that the coho return is looking above forecast.
- Strong correlation between Area 5 encounters and total PS runsize.

- Early indications of strong coho return on coast, CR, and PS.

Fisheries Management Update:

- FRAM update
- Chinook Harvest Management Plan Update
- Anticipated challenges for 2021 NOF

License Sales Update:

- 716,840 Statewide annual licenses sold
- 178,539 Statewide temp licenses sold
- 36% Saltwater licenses sold were in PS Counties
- \$20.5M in revenue from fishing licenses in 2019

Agency Budget Update

- State revenue – \$9B less than expected
- Hiring and Purchasing Freeze
- Furlough and COLA – OFM directs agencies to furlough 20% in July, 1 day/month in fall, and eliminates 3% COLA for certain employees
- Budget Savings for FY21 – OFM directs agencies to identify 15% of reductions

Proposed Reductions:

- 15% makes WDFW's reduction target - \$23.5M
- Combined with shortfalls in federal and local fund sources - \$7.3M
- Fish Program makes up more than 50% of the agency's capital and operating budget.
- Fish Program target was \$14.9M in general fund cuts to identify.

Fish Program Budget Criteria:

- Since OFM requested reductions to GF-S, identifying flexible fund sources was our first step
- Funds considered flexible include GF-S, WL-S, ALEA
- Majority of FP flexible funding goes to hatcheries and fisheries management.

Regional Distribution of Hatchery Facilities with Flexible Fund Sources:

- Eastside Regions 1-3 and 5 rely on federal funding and mitigation agreements and less on flexible funds.
- Westside Regions 4 and 6 rely heavily on flexible fund sources.

DFW Proposed Reductions:

- Salmon and Steelhead Hatchery Production - \$5.2M

- Close six salmon and steelhead hatcheries, including: Forks Creek, Nemah, Reiter, Tokul Creek, Mayr Bros, and Whitehorse hatcheries.
- Reductions impact rec opportunity and SRKW production.
- Reductions represent 7.2% of statewide salmon production, and 1% statewide winter steelhead production.
- Eliminate vacant WMS positions supporting hatchery management and funding for maintenance by 32%.
- Fisheries Opportunity and Management - \$5.7M
 - Reduce monitoring required to provide fishing opportunities on the coast, Puget Sound, Columbia River and Snake River
 - Reduce Dungeness crab outreach, derelict gear removal and bottom trawl surveys
 - Reduce monitoring of Puget Sound early winter steelhead
 - Eliminate several vacant positions
 - Reduce fisheries enforcement patrols by at least 5 officers (Total 11)
- Trout Hatchery Production - \$2.0M
 - Close four trout hatcheries, including: Arlington, Chelan, Naches, and Mossyrock hatcheries.
 - Reductions represent 12.3% percent of trout production statewide.
- Warmwater Gamefish Management - \$2.4M
 - Reduce warmwater gamefish management statewide, seek legislative authority to use funds for other activities
 - Closure of Meseberg hatchery
 - Reduce ability to apply for water access grants
- Dingell-Johnson Shortfall - \$0.8M
 - Closure of Omak hatchery and Cowlitz/Mayfield net pens and reduction in maintenance funding
- Hatchery Grants Shortfall - \$2.6M
 - Closure of Elwha, Toutle, and Skamania hatcheries

PSRFE Budget

PSRFE Budget – FY2 Planning

- How much in G&O fund?
- How much obligated?
- What other project ideas do we have?
 - Marking/tagging at Gorst to look at early, normal and late time Chinook release timing?
 - Others?

Gorst Creek Release Study:

- Background: PS Early Marine Survival study partners have been exploring release times throughout PS to determine affects on survival of juveniles, adult returns and size. The study lacks release location in central PS.
- Project goal: Observe differences in survival and returns of Chinook salmon released from Gorst Creek under two separate release times.
- Why Gorst?: Segregated program, central PS, can conduct the study without impacting current production/ operations.
- Study concept:
 - Tag 200,000-400,000 chinook, beginning 2021 and running a min of 5 yrs
 - Semi-volitional release into Gorst creek each year as sub-yearlings
 - Early timed release – April/ May, late timed – July/ August
 - Funding need \$33k for 200,000 tags or \$66k for 400,000

Subcommittee Updates

Goals and Objectives:

- Gregg, Dave and Wayne met w/ WDFW staff on August 24th
- Reviewed progress to date on goals and objectives and developed scorecard tool (included in meeting materials)
- Key take-aways
 - Making progress on 10/16 objectives
 - Losing ground on 4/16 objectives and overarching goal
 - Challenging to quantify 2/16 objectives
 - Useful to have more regular progress reports
 - Report evaluating salmon rearing and release strategies due in 2022
 - May be able to leverage more funds/ outcomes by shifting to grant program (handout provided)

Outreach:

- COVID limitations on gathering
- Poses challenges for events like Sportsmen’s Show, JBLM and other fishing events
- Other outreach avenues?
 - Web content revisions
 - Social media work
 - Videos
 - Blogs

Other Committee Updates

Committee terms – expire this year

- Solicitation process will begin this fall
- Let Raquel know if you are wishing to continue service

Marking thank you video

- Link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9-c0-3N8Qw>

Wrap-Up

- Other items
- Date & meeting type of next meeting