

# Columbia River Fishery Management WA/OR Workgroup Discussions

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission  
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# Background

- ▶ Commercial fishing became significant in 1861
  - Commercial landings peaked during 1875-1935
  - Harvest reduced each decade after federal dam construction and after ESA
- ▶ Sport fisheries interest grew in early 1950s
  - Steady angler effort growth until 1990s
  - Large angler effort growth again since 2000

# Background (continued)

- ▶ 1992-2005: ESA listing of 13 Columbia River ESUs (population segments)
- ▶ ESA harvest impacts set at levels consistent with recovery of listed populations

# Columbia River Fisheries Challenges

- ▶ Sport and commercial fisheries vital to Washington and Oregon economies
- ▶ Hatchery and healthy wild returns have rebounded since 2000
- ▶ Fisheries limited in access to harvestable fish to meet conservation responsibilities
- ▶ ESA allocation conflicts divide stakeholders

# WA/OR Commissions Process

- ▶ Oregon Governor proposed alternative management approach to Oregon F&W Commission
- ▶ WA Commission will work with Oregon to consider management alternatives
- ▶ Workgroup established to develop options:
  - Three Commissioners from each state
  - Nine advisors representing sport, commercial and four lower river counties
  - First meeting September 21 in Olympia

# Sep. 21 Workgroup Meeting

- ▶ WDFW and ODFW Directors – purpose and process
- ▶ Current management overview
- ▶ Tribal presentations
- ▶ Staff Report- Strategies for Initial Analysis and Discussion
- ▶ Workgroup discussion of issues
- ▶ Conservation interest presentation
- ▶ Public comments
- ▶ Information requests

# Management Strategies for Columbia River Recreational and Commercial Fisheries-- 2013 and Beyond

## *Oregon and Washington Staff Options for Initial Analysis and Discussion*



# Approach to Options for Initial Discussion

- Incorporates concepts in Governor Kitzhaber's proposal to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission
- Includes additional details developed by Oregon and Washington staff
- Recognizes that Oregon and Washington Commissions will make final determinations
- Includes a 4-year transition (2013-2016) period to avoid significant economic harm to commercial fisheries



# Guiding Principles

- Leadership promoting fish recovery
- Conserve ESA-listed and weak fish species; meet commitments to Treaty Tribes
- Enhance overall economic benefits of fisheries
- Develop selective gear and techniques; phase out non-selective gill nets in the mainstem
- Prioritize recreational fisheries in the mainstem; commercial fisheries in off-channel sites
- Enhance off-channel commercial fisheries

# Transition Period (2013-2016)

- Continue gill net fishing in mainstem while selective-fishing gears and techniques further developed
- Partially shift a larger share of incidental-take/harvestable surplus to mainstem recreational fisheries
- Enhance off-channel sites (e.g. fish, infrastructure)
- Develop, evaluate and implement additional selective-fishing methods
- Secure support and resources for implementation

# Allocations During Transition Period

- Upriver Spring Chinook, Summer Chinook and Sockeye: Would assign 70% of incidental-take or harvestable surplus to mainstem recreational fisheries
- Tule and Upriver Bright Fall Chinook: Would assign no more than 70% of incidental-take to mainstem recreational fisheries to meet management objectives. WFWC Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy to be considered in allocations
- Coho: Would assign commercial fisheries incidental-take to implement off-channel coho and fall Chinook fisheries and mainstem fall Chinook fisheries, as well as mainstem coho fisheries when incidental-take available

# Allocations During Transition Period

- White Sturgeon: Would hold 10% of harvestable surplus in reserve as a conservation buffer. Would assign 80% of the balance to mainstem recreational fisheries and 20% to commercial fisheries



# Mainstem Commercial Fishing During Transition Period

- Would use selective gear and techniques if available and practical
- Would provide additional mainstem commercial fishing opportunity when:
  - Mainstem recreational fisheries unable to fully use their incidental-take/harvestable surplus
  - Objectives for mainstem recreational fisheries met
  - To address WFWC Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy

# Enhanced Production at Off-Channel Sites During Transition Period

- Spring Chinook: Would increase by 1 million fish annually
  - 250,000 by Oregon in 2010
  - 500,000 by Oregon in 2013
  - 200,000 - 250,000 by Washington (depending on funding)
- Coho: Would increase by 1 million fish annually
  - 800,000 by Oregon in 2013
  - 200,000 by Washington in 2013
- Select Area Bright Fall Chinook: Oregon would increase by 500,000 annually, beginning in 2013 if possible

# Opportunities to Expand Off-Channel Sites During Transition Period

- Existing Off-Channel Sites: Oregon would seek funding to:
  - Evaluate feasibility of more commercial fishing time
  - Evaluate feasibility of expanding commercially fishable area
- New Off-Channel Sites: Oregon and Washington would seek funding to:
  - Evaluate the feasibility of establishing new sites in Oregon and Washington

# Allocations and Mainstem Fishing in Long Term (Beyond 2016)

- Non-tribal mainstem commercial fisheries would be restricted to the use of selective gear/techniques
- Additional mainstem commercial fishing when:
  - Mainstem recreational fisheries unable to fully use their incidental-take/harvestable surplus
  - Objectives for mainstem recreational fisheries met
  - To meet WFWC Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy



# Allocations and Mainstem Fishing in Long Term (Beyond 2016)

- Spring and Summer Chinook: 80% of incidental-take or harvestable surplus to mainstem recreational fisheries
- Tule Fall Chinook: Would assign  $\leq 80\%$  of incidental-take to mainstem recreational fisheries-annual assessment of fishery and conservation objectives
- Upriver Bright Fall Chinook: Would assign  $\leq 80\%$  of incidental-take to mainstem recreational fisheries – annual assessment of fishery and conservation objectives

# Allocations and Mainstem Fishing in Long Term (Beyond 2016)

- Coho: Would assign commercial fisheries incidental-take to implement off-channel coho and fall Chinook fisheries, mainstem fall Chinook fisheries, as well as mainstem coho fisheries when incidental-take available
- White Sturgeon: Would hold 10% of harvestable surplus in reserve as a conservation buffer. Would assign 80% of the balance to mainstem recreational fisheries and 20% to commercial fisheries

# Enhanced Production at Existing Off-Channel Sites in Long Term (Beyond 2016)

- Spring Chinook: Could increase by 1.25 million fish annually (includes increased production during transition period)
  - 950,000 – 1 million during transition period
  - Additional 250,000 by Oregon (depending on funding)
- Coho: Could increase by 4.8 million fish annually (includes increased production during transition period)
  - 1 million during transition period
  - Additional 3.8 million by Oregon (depending on funding)

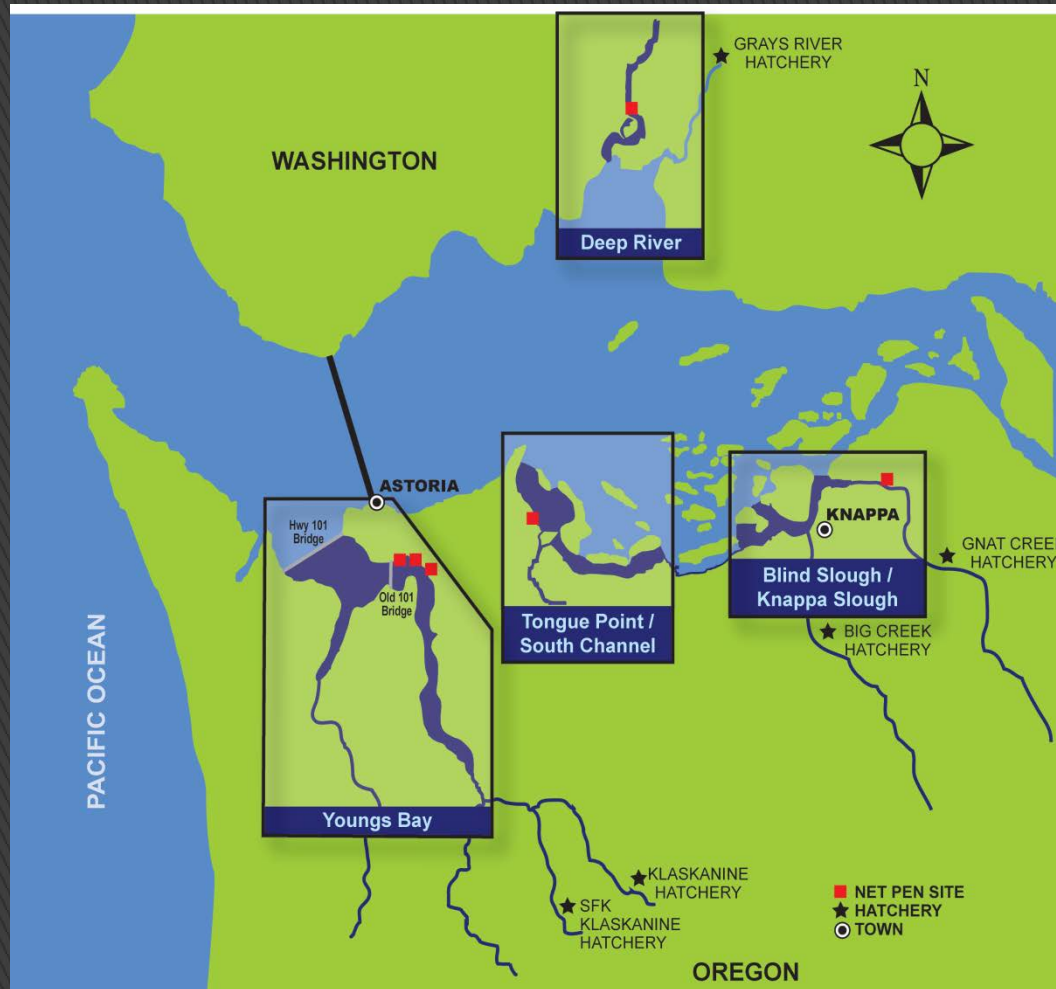
# Enhanced Production at Existing Off-Channel Sites in Long Term (Beyond 2016)

- Select Area Bright Fall Chinook: Could increase by 750,000 fish annually (includes increased production during transition period)
  - 500,000 during transition period
  - 250,000 by Oregon (depending on funding)

# Expansion of Off-Channel Commercial Fisheries in Long Term (Beyond 2016)

- Existing Off-Channel Sites: If evaluations during transition period indicate feasible:
  - Would provide more commercial fishing time
  - Would expand the commercially fishable area
- New Off-Channel Sites: If evaluations during transition period indicate feasible
  - Would establish new sites in Oregon and Washington

# Lower Columbia SAFE Areas



# Adaptive Management

Adjustments could be made to the long-term management framework if one or more of the following triggers occur:

- Significantly lower than expected returns to off-channel sites
- Insufficient space in off-channel sites to accommodate the commercial fleet
- Significantly lower than expected mainstem commercial harvest using selective gears
- Circumstances that delay or preclude use of selective techniques or enhancement of off-channel fish production

# Adaptive Management (continued)

- Significantly lower than expected economic return to commercial fishers
- Conflicts with terms of the *US v Oregon* Management Agreement
- Failure to meet conservation needs



# Follow-up Tasks for WDFW/ODFW Staff

- Review and clarify additional Governor Kitzhaber guidance to Oregon Commission
- Describe baseline fishery compared to transition period strategies
- Describe cost and funding sources for production shifts to select areas.
- Describe what the options mean relative to conservation objectives
- Display impacts and outcomes by season-show fall season complexity

# Follow-up Tasks for WDFW/ODFW Staff

- Differentiate fishery outcomes between transition period and long-term strategies
- Explore new select areas and monitoring strategies
- Consider how important new SAFE areas are for space and capacity
- Consider alternative gear options in fishery evaluations
- Coordinate with HSRG
- Provide current harvest levels including tribal fishery

# Other Follow-up Tasks

- Circulate letters from public to Workgroup and Advisors
- Commercial Advisors prepare a summary of concerns and needs and what would meet needs
- Site visit to SAFE areas for Commissioners

# Moving Forward

- ▶ WDFW Website Available With Additional Detail
- ▶ Next Workgroup Meeting October 18 in Portland
- ▶ Commission Briefing in November
- ▶ Potential third Workgroup meeting in November
- ▶ Commission Meeting In December