

Puget Sound Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Fund - (Briefing)

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Summary

Meeting dates:	June 12, 2015
Agenda item:	Puget Sound Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Fund (Briefing)
Presenter(s):	Laurie Peterson, Puget Sound Salmon Manager, Fish Program Ryan Lothrop, Puget Sound Recreational Salmon Manager, Fish Program Dave Knutzen, Chair PSRFE Oversight Committee

Background summary:

The Puget Sound Recreational Salmon and Marine Fish Enhancement Program (PSRFE) was created by the legislature in 1993. Anglers fishing in Puget Sound desired to improve recreational fishing in the Sound and were willing to contribute an additional \$10 per angler to fund improvements. The original bill focused heavily on rearing year-old Chinook smolts (“delayed release”) to enhance the winter blackmouth fishery. The legislature also authorized a citizens Oversight Committee to advise WDFW’s director on all aspects of the fisheries enhancement program, such as reviewing projects and providing guidance on funding activities related to the enhancement program.

The original goal of producing 3 million delayed-release Chinook became increasingly difficult to attain during the last decade. Key factors cited in an April 2010 state performance audit of the PSRFE include:

- Concerns about the effect of releasing millions of hatchery salmon on wild fish protected under the federal Endangered Species Act.
- Declining survival rates for delayed-salmon, due mostly to environmental conditions in Puget Sound.
- Reduced capacity at state hatcheries to hold and feed fish for a year.

Legislation was introduced and passed in 2011 to modify the program and shift the focus from production goals to performance based goals. The revised legislation includes provisions that:

- Authorize the WDFW director and the PSRFE’s Oversight Committee to develop, review and approve outcome-based goals for the program.
- Require WDFW to evaluate the effectiveness of the Puget Sound fishery enhancement program, considering the number of daily angler fishing trips in Puget Sound and the percentage of the program’s hatchery-produced fish that survive to contribute to the recreational fishery.
- Require WDFW and the PSRFE Oversight Committee report annually to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission and biennially to the Legislature on the program goals and WDFW’s effectiveness in achieving those goals.

WDFW and the Oversight Committee completed development of goals and objectives for the PSRFE Program in February 2013. An update on the progress made in achieving performance measures identified within the PSRFE goals and objectives is the focus of this briefing.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

None

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

N/A

Action requested:

None. Briefing Only.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A

Communications Plan:

N/A

Form revised 12/5/12

Puget Sound Recreational Salmon and Marine Fish Enhancement Program Goals and Objectives (adopted February 22, 2013)

RCW 77.105.160

The Puget Sound Recreational Salmon and Marine Fish Enhancement Program (PSRE) Oversight Committee has the following duties:

- (A) Develop recommendations, with assistance from the coordinator, for outcome-based goals and objectives to assess the effectiveness of the program;
- (B) Meet with the director each year to review these goals and objectives;
- (C) Report annually with the director to the commission on the goals of the program and the effectiveness of the program in meeting those goals;

The purpose of the PSRE is to conserve, enhance, and promote recreational fisheries within Puget Sound and Lake Washington. These goals and objectives were developed jointly by the Oversight Committee and WDFW, and may be modified over time as new information becomes available.

- Program Goal: Improve the recreational fishing opportunities in Puget Sound and Lake Washington and increase the economic benefits from the fishery.
 - Outcome Performance Measure: Increase angler trips in Puget Sound and Lake Washington by 5% per biennium.
 - i) Strategy: Improve marketing and remove obstacles to build interest and participation in the fishery.
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- (1) Objective: Increase the percentage of Puget Sound anglers that are aware of Puget Sound fishing opportunities supported by PSRE.
 - (a) Performance Measure: 10% increase in awareness per biennium.
 - (2) Objective: Identify and promote fisheries on healthy stocks currently underutilized.
 - (a) Performance Measure: Identify underutilized fish stocks in Puget Sound by 2015.
 - (b) Performance Measure: Increase angler trips on identified and abundant underutilized stocks within the constraints of available stock surplus by 2022.

(3) Objective: Capitalize on WDFW activities to develop marketing tools in a unified approach to encourage participation and educate new and experienced anglers when, where, and how to fish in Puget Sound.

(a) Performance Measure: Develop 5 new tools by 2017 to increase awareness of Puget Sound fishing opportunities.

ii) Strategy: Increase effectiveness of hatcheries providing salmon to Puget Sound fisheries.

(1) Objective: Review salmon production programs and facilities in Puget Sound to better understand their capabilities, limitations, and ways to increase the contribution rate.

(a) Performance Measure: Report completed by 2014 that calculates and summarizes survival rates, contribution rates, and cost/fish; in addition, identifies new rearing and release strategies to be evaluated in a future study.

(b) Performance Measure: Report completed by 2022 that evaluates new rearing and release strategies identified by the 2014 report to increase contribution rate.

(2) Objective: Minimize the cost/fish of hatchery salmon caught in Puget Sound marine fisheries

(a) Performance Measure: Reduce average production cost/fish caught in Puget Sound marine recreational fisheries by 30% for yearling and sub-yearling Chinook by 2022 after adjustment for cost of living (e.g. CPI, current inflation rate).

(3) Objective: Evaluate potential to improve fishing opportunities with artificial production of other salmon species, e.g. coho, consistent with Hatchery and Fishery Reform Policy.

(a) Performance Measure: Report completed by 2015 that evaluates other species for cost/benefit ratio, timing of fishing opportunities, and ability to attract and retain new or lapsed anglers.

(4) Objective: Increase the survival of Lake Washington sockeye.

(a) Performance Measure: Report that identifies alternative rearing strategies (e.g. timing, size, acclimation, release location, rearing conditions) to increase survival rate by 2015.

iii) Strategy: Develop a long term strategy for improving recreational bottomfish fisheries in Puget Sound.

(1) Objective: Support research to evaluate the risks and uncertainties associated with the release of cultured bottomfish and artificial habitats.

(a) Performance Measure: Report that evaluates studies to date on lingcod culture and provides recommendations by 2015.

(2) Objective: Use outreach and education to decrease mortality on rockfish.

(a) Performance Measure: Improve angler identification of rockfish species by 50% by 2017.

(b) Performance Measure: Increase use of descender tools on rockfish to 50% of the encounters by 2017.

(c) Performance Measure: Decrease angler encounters (e.g. released bycatch and unintentional retention) of rockfish by 10% by 2017.

iv) Strategy: Stabilize and enhance resources invested in improving Puget Sound recreational fisheries.

(1) Objective: License fees and contribution rate of enhancement funds are adjusted regularly to reflect the cost of living (e.g. CPI, current inflation rate).

(a) Performance Measure: Legislation is modified so license fees and the contribution rate adjust each biennium to reflect the cost of living.

(2) Objective: Identify and pursue other funding sources.

(a) Performance Measure: PSRE funding is leveraged by 20% by 2017.

(3) Objective: Increase the number of licensed anglers that fish in Puget Sound and Lake Washington.

(a) Performance Measure: Ten-year rolling average of the number of saltwater and combination licenses purchased by anglers that fish in Puget Sound and Lake Washington trends upwards.