

## Summary

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**Meeting dates:** March 4, 2016 Commission Conference Call

**Agenda item:** Colville Confederated Tribes' petition to reduce harvest of wild Redband Rainbow Trout and increase hatchery Rainbow Trout harvest on Lake Roosevelt

**Presenter(s):** Chris Donley, Region 1 Fish Program Manager  
Craig Burley, Fish Management Division Manager

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### **Background summary:**

The Fish and Wildlife Commission has received a petition from the Colville Confederated Tribes to amend WAC 220-310-195 to adjust harvest rules on wild Redband Rainbow Trout and hatchery Rainbow Trout in Lake Roosevelt. (Note, a typographical error in the petition refers to WAC 220-130-195).

The petition states:

*“Lake Roosevelt Rainbow Trout harvest regulation change to: Daily limit of 10 adipose-absent trout, no size limit; Daily limit of 1 adipose present trout 18” or greater; Sanpoil River Arm: Closed to Trout fishing February 1 to May 30.*

*To ensure long term sustainability of wild Redband Rainbow Trout genetics. Move harvest pressure off native fishes and towards the mitigation fishery (hatchery triploids). Protect staging and spawning native Redband Rainbow Trout during spring. See attach*

*Increased angler harvest on the mitigation fishery (750,000 released annually) while protecting native Redband Rainbow Trout. See attachment.”*

The current fishing regulations are listed in Attachment 1.

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

Pursuant to RCW 34.05.330, should the Commission:

- a) Deny the petition in writing, stating the reasons for the denial, specifically addressing the concerns raised by the petitioner, and where appropriate, the alternative means by which it will address the concerns raised by the petitioner; or
  - b) Initiate rule making
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### **Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

The Fish and Wildlife Commission has received this petition requesting amendments to recreational fishing rules to change Rainbow Trout harvest in Lake Roosevelt.

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### **Action requested:**

Department Staff recommends that the Fish and Wildlife Commission grant the petition and initiate rulemaking to consider additional conservation sportfishing regulations for wild Redband Rainbow Trout in Lake Roosevelt and the Sanpoil River and to consider sportfishing regulations to increase harvest opportunities for hatchery trout in Lake Roosevelt.

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**Draft motion language:**

I move to grant the Colville Confederated Tribes' petition to amend WAC 220-310-195 and direct staff to move forward with rule making.

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**Justification for Commission action:**

Fishing in Lake Roosevelt is managed cooperatively by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department), Colville Confederated Tribe of Indians (petitioners), and the Spokane Tribe of Indians (collectively Cooperators). Lake Roosevelt provides a popular recreational and subsistence Rainbow Trout fishery. There currently is an annual release of 750,000 adipose clipped, triploid, hatchery Rainbow Trout that provides the majority of the Rainbow Trout caught. This hatchery Rainbow Trout program is funded by Bonneville Power Administration as mitigation for lost anadromous and resident fish resources resulting from the construction and operation of Grand Coulee Dam. There are also wild Redband Rainbow Trout in Lake Roosevelt and tributaries consisting of 5 major tributary populations (Sanpoil River, Kettle River, Spokane River, Big Sheep Creek and the main stem Columbia River above Lake Roosevelt) and approximately 20 small tributary populations. The annual Rainbow Trout harvest in the reservoir is 25,000 to 50,000 of which 2,500 to 4,000 are wild Redband Rainbow Trout.

The wild Redband Rainbow Trout are believed to be an important genetic legacy for interior Columbia River steelhead, extirpated from the Upper Columbia River post-construction of Grand Coulee Dam. In light of the current momentum for anadromous fish re-introduction above Grand Coulee Dam, there is a need to maintain resident Redband populations at levels that allow for mining genetics for re-introduction of Columbia River interior steelhead into Lake Roosevelt and tributaries.

The Lake Roosevelt Guiding Document, developed by the Cooperators, prescribes an annual harvest goal of 100,000 hatchery Rainbow Trout. The petitioners would like the Commission to consider increasing the daily bag limit of hatchery Rainbow Trout in Lake Roosevelt from 5 to 10, and to eliminate the size limit on those fish, to increase the harvest of hatchery Rainbow Trout and assist with attaining the annual reservoir harvest goal. Additionally the petitioners' propose to restrict harvest of wild Redband Rainbow Trout to 1 fish daily, 18 inches or greater in length. Current regulations limit harvest of wild Redband Rainbow Trout to 5 no more than 2 over 20 inches.

The petitioner's also request modifications to existing rules for the Sanpoil Arm of Lake Roosevelt to provide additional conservation protection for native Redband Rainbow Trout. Specifically, the regulations currently do not allow wild Redband Rainbow Trout harvest in the Sanpoil Arm, and close it to all fishing from February 1 to March 31 of each year. The petitioners requests that the Commission close the Sanpoil Arm to all trout fishing from February 1 to May 30 annually

Over the past seven years all three Cooperators have embarked on studies to determine the status and trend of wild Redband Rainbow Trout in Lake Roosevelt and tributaries. These studies are only partially completed and have not fully tested the hypotheses that were developed during initiation of the studies. Preliminary data shows some indication that there can be differential harvest by stock in portions of the reservoir (see petition attached). These studies need to be completed to fully understand wild Redband Rainbow Trout population dynamics, distribution, status, and fishery harvest impacts. The Department continues to work in concert with the cooperators to complete these studies to better manage wild Redband Rainbow Trout in Lake Roosevelt and tributaries.

In conclusion, The Department recommends that the commission move forward with rulemaking to determine the level of conservation sportfishing regulations that should be promulgated prior to completing the current studies designed to better understand the status of Redband Rainbow Trout, and to provide additional harvest opportunities for hatchery Rainbow Trout in Lake Roosevelt.

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**Communications Plan:**

N/A

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**(311) Roosevelt Lake (Grant/Ferry/Lincoln/Stevens counties):**

(a) The following areas are closed:

(i) From the Little Dalles power line crossing upstream approximately one mile to the marked rock point, and from Northport power line crossing upstream to the most upstream point of Steamboat Rock, from March 1 through the Friday before Memorial Day.

(ii) The Kettle arm upstream to Barstow Bridge from April 1 through the Friday before Memorial Day.

(b) Carp: It is unlawful to fish for carp with bow and arrow.

(c) Kokanee: Limit 6; no more than 2 with intact adipose fins may be retained.

(d) Salmon: Landlocked salmon rules apply.

(e) Trout (except kokanee): Limit 5; it is unlawful to retain more than 2 over 20 inches in length.

(f) Walleye: No size restrictions; limit 16 fish.

**(323) San Poil River (Ferry County):**

(a) From the western shoreline at the mouth of the San Poil Arm (as marked by a regulatory buoy) directly eastward across the San Poil Arm to the eastern shoreline of the San Poil Arm (as marked by a regulatory buoy) upstream to the north shore of the outlet of French Johns Lake (Manila Creek) northeast across the San Poil Arm to the north shore of the outlet of Dick Creek:

(i) Open April 1 through January 31 for kokanee, smallmouth bass, trout, and walleye:

(A) Kokanee: Limit 2 fish in addition to the trout limit; no minimum size requirement.

(B) Smallmouth bass: Limit 10; it is unlawful to retain more than one over 14 inches.

(C) Trout:

(I) Limit 5; it is unlawful to retain more than 2 trout over 20 inches.

(II) Release all rainbow trout with adipose fins intact.

(D) Walleye: Limit 16; no size restrictions.

(ii) Open year-round for other game fish, salmon, and carp:

(A) Carp: It is unlawful to fish for carp with bow and arrow.

(B) Salmon: Landlocked salmon rules apply.

(b) From the north shore of the outlet of French Johns Lake (Manila Creek) northeast across the San Poil Arm to the north shore of the outlet of Dick Creek to approximately 5 miles upstream from the outlet of French Johns Lake, as marked by regulatory buoys:

(i) It is unlawful to fish for or retain trout.

(ii) Open April 1 through January 31 for walleye and smallmouth bass:

(A) Smallmouth bass: Limit 10; it is unlawful to retain more than one over 14 inches.

(B) Walleye: Limit 16; no size restrictions.

(iii) Open year-round for other game fish, salmon, and carp:

(A) Carp: It is unlawful to fish for carp with bow and arrow.

(B) Salmon: Landlocked salmon rules apply.

(c) The waters from approximately 5 miles upstream from the outlet of French Johns Lake, as marked by regulatory buoys, to all waters north of the regulatory buoy line at or above 1,310 feet mean sea level elevation are managed under the regulatory authority of the Colville Confederated Tribe of Indians.

(d) From above the Colville Confederated Tribe of Indians Reservation northern boundary, upstream to the headwaters, including tributaries: Open the Saturday before Memorial day through October 31.