
Summary

- Meeting date:** November 4, 2016
- Agenda item #6:** Puget Sound Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Fund (Briefing)
- Presenter(s):**
- Ryan Lothrop, Puget Sound Recreational Salmon Manager, Fish Program
 - Kirt Hughes, Statewide Salmon and Steelhead Manager
 - Dave Knutzen, Chair PSRFE Oversight Committee
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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
