

Columbia River Sturgeon Policy Review, C-3001

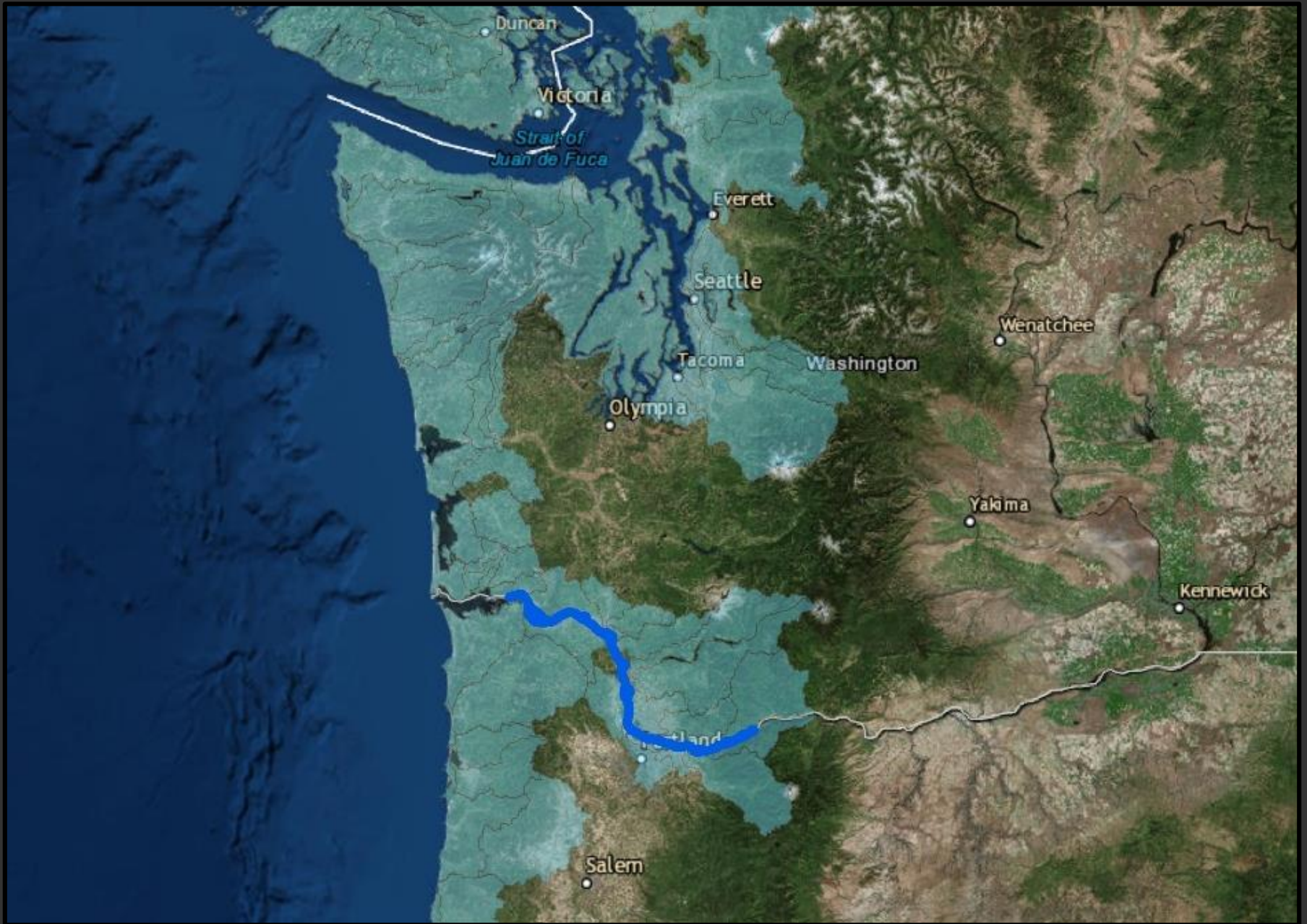


Laura Heironimus, CRMU Sturgeon/Smelt/Lamprey Unit Lead
Bill Tweit, Special Assistant

Purpose

- Review of Commission Policy C-3001 “Lower Columbia Sturgeon Management”





Outline

- Background
- Policy Updates
 - Conservation Objectives
 - Management Objectives
 - Annual Review
- Advisor Comments
- Next Steps



Background

- Policy C-3001
 - Policy established for over two decades (~1996)
 - Includes conservation and management objectives
 - Language is broad enough to protect the population whether in fair or poor condition
- Joint State Accord on Columbia River Sturgeon
 - Developed and negotiated with ODFW
 - Consistent with policy objectives
 - Specific management regulations (hook size, slot limit, quota, etc.)

Current Policy Guidance: C-3001

- In effect: March 1, 2014–December 31, 2018.
- Increase the abundance of the spawning population.
- Manage with a precautionary approach.
- Population monitoring (within available resources):
 - Young-of-the-year sampling.
 - Evaluate legal-size abundance estimator methods.
 - Monitor sea lion predation.
- Maintain viable and diverse fishing opportunities.
- Delegation of Authority to the Director for management.

Proposed Updates

- Removed expiration date.
- Simplified and clarified language.
- Added a few new points.
 - Conservation Objective – Columbia River flows.
 - Annual Review – Policy updates, Director review, and consult with advisors.



Conservation Objectives



- Updated language.
 - For example: instead of “Continue to monitor...” updated to “Monitor...”
- Added “Estimate population abundance for all size-classes.”
- Added “Advocate for Columbia River flow regimes that promote successful spawning, incubation, and early rearing.”

Management Objectives

- Moved abundance estimates to conservation section.
- Updated language.
 - For example: instead of “Management should be based on consideration of...” update to “Management should consider...”
- Updated “Minimize emergency in-season action” to “Stay within approved harvest guidelines.”



Management Objectives



- Updated “Consideration of fisheries outside the Columbia River must take into account the ability to monitor and manage those fisheries...”
- Added “Maintain prohibition of Green Sturgeon retention until delisting occurs...”

Annual Review



- Removed expiration date.
- Added “This policy may be updated as part of any annual Lower Columbia sturgeon stock status review.”
- Added “The Director will provide the Commission a review of this Policy at least every 5 years.”
- Added “The Director will consult with the appropriate recreational and commercial advisory bodies during this process.”

Recreational Advisor/Public Comments

- Three recreational advisors provided comments.
- Concern over phrasing “Balance catch between estuary and non-estuary fisheries...”
 - Joint State Accord outlines a 60/40 split of estuary/non-estuary sport quota.
- Concern over current status of population and recommended no retention or catch-and-release fishing.

Recreational Advisor/Public Comments

- Recommended we follow objectives outlined in ODFW's Lower Columbia River and Oregon Coast White Sturgeon Conservation Plan, including taking action when approaching or surpassing conservation thresholds.
- Concern over high pinniped predation.

Commercial Advisor/Public Comments

- Three commercial advisors provided comments.
- Concern over “Maintain 80/20 sport/commercial harvest allocation.”
- Concern of fishing guides using sport quota rather than commercial quota.
- Concern about “Spread harvest opportunity throughout the year.” Currently the only opportunity occurs in mainstem fall fisheries.

Commercial Advisor/Public Comments

- Recommended policy have stronger stance on conservation and offer more protection for sturgeon resource.
- Recommended consideration of hatchery production of sturgeon.
- Concern over current status of population and recommended no retention fishing.
- Concern over high pinniped predation.

Next Steps

- Adopt final policy at January Commission meeting.

Thank you



Questions?

