

Fishing Guide Logbook Progress Report

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



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Background

Work on the concept of a logbook system began during the 2017 legislative session, when a bill was introduced that would have drastically changed how guides are regulated in the state of Washington. While the bill did not pass, it sparked a formal process for the agency to begin engaging fishing guides throughout Washington in an evaluation of the industry; what we know about usage and trends, contribution to local economies and alternative structures of regulation.



The agency held 14 meetings in the summer of 2018, and another eight in early 2019. Guides shared perspectives on regulation of the industry, data gaps facing management of the industry and the resource, and the idea of establishing a guide logbook system similar to the one that was in place for years in Alaska.

WAC 220-352-245

During the summer of 2019, the Fish & Wildlife Commission adopted rules requiring guides to fill out logbooks to record data on their fishing activity. The rule went into effect Jan. 1, 2020. See WAC language below:

Reporting required of licensed food fish, game fish and combination fishing guides.

(1) Licensed food fish, game fish and combination fishing guides shall maintain a daily logbook of guiding activity to include:

- (a) Guide name and license No. for the guide leading the trip;
- (b) Date that fishing took place. For multiday trips, each day is considered a separate trip;
- (c) Specific name of river, stream, or lake fished;
- (d) Site code of site fished as referenced within a list provided to each guide. If multiple sites are fished on the same day, each site is considered a separate trip;
- (e) Client, "comped angler" and crew current fishing license number (wild ID No.) for each person on board if required to have a license or catch record card. A comped angler is an angler that fishes without charge;



- (f) Indicate if person was a crew member or if angler was "comped";
- (g) Species kept or released. For salmon and steelhead specify origin (hatchery, wild) and life stage (adult, jack).
- (2) Logbooks are required to be completed for each trip before offloading any fish from the vessel or if no fish were kept, complete the logbook before leaving the site.
- (3) Report of daily guiding activity shall be made using the department's paper logbook or online reporting application. Logbook pages must be provided to the department or postmarked within ten days following any calendar month in which the guiding activity took place.
- (4) Each day of fishing that occurs on a designated WDFW licensed guide fish vessel will be required to be recorded in the logbook. This includes any personal use or nonguided fishing trips that occur.
- (5) Information collected under this section may be exempt from public disclosure to the extent provided under RCW 42.56.430.
- (6) Failure to report any guiding activity listed in subsections (1) through (4) of this section is an infraction, punishable under RCW 77.15.160.
- (7) A fishing guide, or person under the control or direction of a fishing guide, that submits false information is guilty of a gross misdemeanor, punishable under RCW 77.15.270.

Objective

The new logbook reporting system will allow the agency to collect additional biological data, but more importantly, it will allow us to collect data on industry trends. This data will help build a more accurate picture of the demographics of the industry, the geographic distribution of guide activity in Washington, and the contribution guides have on local economies. It will also allow us to increase our communications around the role the industry plays in promoting tourism, conservation and the recruitment of new anglers into the sport.



Input from Fishing Guides

The agency solicited input from guides on a logbook system throughout 2018 and 2019, through public meetings and through public comment during the Commission's rulemaking process. Further the agency established a Fishing Guide Advisory Committee to help scope reporting tools, beta test them and help with implementation and communication around the new requirement.



Project Implementation

Ad Hoc Fishing Guide Advisory Group

In the fall of 2019, the agency solicited for members of the Ad Hoc Fishing Guide Advisory Group. Twelve fishing guides were selected from throughout the state with membership representing a diversity of business models and target fisheries gear and fly-fishing guides, as well as full time and part time guides.

The Committee met quarterly at minimum, sometimes every other month to work through development of reporting tools. They helped the agency staff beta test tools and played an integral role in reaching out to the guide community to notify guides of the new rule and get input on reporting tools. See a list of advisory committee members in Appendix 1.

Outlining Key Information Needs

The WAC outlined key information needs required from guides and the department worked with the guide advisory committee to further define these. Required information for logbook reporting include;

- *Guide name and license number* – So we can validate that reports are being submitted by licensed guides.
- *The date that the fishing trip took place.* Since some guides run multiple trips in a day and some run multi-day trips, the reporting tools allow guides to enter multiple trips under one date.
- *Whether the trip was “paid” or “comped.”* This allows us to can track economic contributions resulting from guided fishing trips.
- *Whether the trip was guided or non-guided* - If the trip was not a guided trip, the guide does not need to fill out any other information on the form. Filling out the date for personal trips allows enforcement of the rule without collecting unnecessary data from personal trips.
- *The name of the waterbody fished.* Rivers, streams and lakes coincide with catch codes to make it easier and allow cross-referencing with creel data. If multiple sites are fished on the same day, each site is considered a separate trip.
- *A list of client’s and crew fishing license numbers.* If the client is fishing with an Oregon, Idaho or charter stamp vs. a Washington fishing license, that number can be substituted for a WILD ID. If the angler is a youth and doesn’t require a license, “youth” can be selected on the form.
- *Species caught and kept or released.* Agency staff worked with guide committee members to identify primary species targeted by guides. And for salmon and steelhead we ask to specify origin (hatchery, wild) and life stage (adult, jack).



Designing and Refining Reporting Tools

To make reporting easy, the agency developed two options for reporting: a mobile application for both iOS and android devices and a paper logbook. The two reporting tools were designed at the same time to collect the same basic information from guides.

Reporting tools were beta tested by guide committee members and other willing fishing guides during the winter of 2019. Beta testing allowed us to identify further design changes and functions to build into the reporting tools, especially the mobile application, to make it easier to use, to allow scanning of WILD ID barcodes and to allow access to past reports.

Paper Logbook

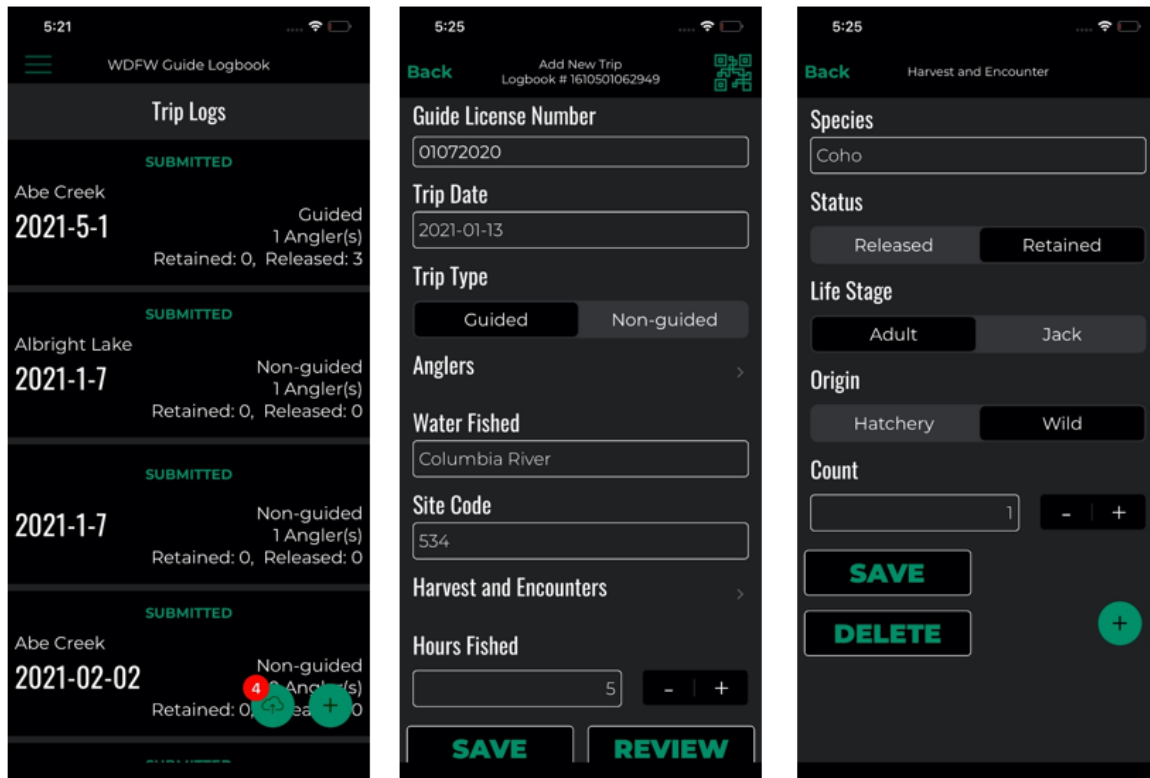
The paper logbook was printed into booklets of 30 carbon copied blank trip logs in a hard card waterproof binding. Along with the blank trip logs, the logbook includes reporting and return instructions. The sample below shows what a trip log looks like.

Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife		SAMPLE						#####	
GUIDE LOGBOOK		(FOR WDFW RECORDS ONLY) DATE RECEIVED: _____							
TRIP DATE: <i>Month / Day / Year</i>		CHINOOK		COHO		STEELHEAD			
GUIDE LICENSE #: <i>License #</i>		RETAINED	RELEASED	RETAINED	RELEASED	RETAINED	RELEASED	RETAINED	RELEASED
TRIP TYPE: GUIDED / NON-GUIDED		ADULT / HATCHERY	<i>1</i>	#	ADULT / HATCHERY	#	<i>3</i>	ADULT / HATCHERY	<i>2</i>
WATER FISHED & COUNTY: <i>Washougal Hatchery on Washougal River</i>		JACK / HATCHERY	<i>1</i>	#	JACK / HATCHERY	<i>5</i>	<i>1</i>	JACK / HATCHERY	#
SITE CODE: <i>663</i>		ADULT / WILD	#	<i>1</i>	ADULT / WILD	#	#	ADULT / WILD	#
HOURS FISHED: <i>8</i>		JACK / WILD	#	#	JACK / WILD	#	#	JACK / WILD	<i>2</i>
CUSTOMER WILD ID OR GUIDE STAMP #: <i>ID #</i>		RAINBOW		COASTAL CUTTHROAT		STURGEON			
ANGLERS WILD ID #: _____ PAID? _____		RETAINED	RELEASED	RETAINED	RELEASED	RETAINED	RELEASED	RETAINED	RELEASED
<i>Angler Wild ID #</i> _____ <input type="radio"/> Y <input checked="" type="radio"/> N		HATCHERY	<i>1</i>	#	HATCHERY	#	<i>1</i>	HATCHERY	<i>1</i>
<i>Angler Wild ID #</i> _____ <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N		WILD	#	#	WILD	#	#	WILD	#
<i>Angler Wild ID #</i> _____ <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N		WALLEYE		LARGEMOUTH BASS		SMALLMOUTH BASS			
<i>Angler Wild ID #</i> _____ <input checked="" type="radio"/> Y <input type="radio"/> N		# RELEASED / RETAINED <i>2</i>		# RELEASED / RETAINED #		<i>1</i> RELEASED / RETAINED #			
SPECIES: <i>Add if applicable</i>		SPECIES: <i>Add if applicable</i>		SPECIES: <i>Add if applicable</i>		SPECIES: <i>Add if applicable</i>			
<i>4</i> RELEASED / RETAINED #		# RELEASED / RETAINED <i>1</i>		<i>2</i> RELEASED / RETAINED #		#			
CERTIFICATION: I certify that the information provided on this form is true. Falsification or omission of information is punishable under RCW 77.15.020 WAC 220.352.245		SIGNATURE: <i>Your Signature</i>		PRINTED NAME: <i>Your Name</i>		EMAIL: <i>Your Email</i>			



Mobile Reporting Application for Android and iPhones

The mobile application includes the basic trip log function as well as a main page which lists draft reports. The mobile app allows guides to log trip data as they go and if they don't have service, it allows them to save data and sync reports when they get back into service range. The screen shots below show what the mobile WDFW Guide Logbook application looks like.



Outreach to Fishing Guides

In the winter of 2019, a letter was sent to guides from Fish Program Director Kelly Cunningham and Chief Bear notifying guides of the new logbook reporting rule, outlining the reporting tools and how to use them as well as our approach to enforcing this new rule. Another letter was sent to fishing guide license holders the winter of 2020 providing an update on implementation of the logbook reporting rule and compliance with the rule so far. Along with that letter all guides received a paper logbook with their license renewal packets. In the winter of 2021, fishing guides received a text reminder to report any unsubmitted reports and those who renewed their license received a logbook.

Additionally, text reminders have been sent to guides using our new public input software along with emails reminders and updates about the mobile application reporting tool.



WDFW staff also provided information about the new rule to guides at Sportsmen's shows until those in-person opportunities were stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The WDFW team also worked with the Fishing Guide Advisory Committee to develop web content on the reporting rule and other regulatory requirements for guides. Guide Committee Members have helped us get communications out to the industry through their networks including state and regional guide associations. The agency is looking at ways to further increase communication and compliance rates as we move into 2022.

Data Analysis

Compliance/ Participation in Year 1

The percent of licensed guides reporting their trips since the logbook reporting rule went into effect in January of 2020 has not yet reached 50% of licensed guides, with just 46% of guides reporting in 2020 and a marginal decrease to 43% in 2021.

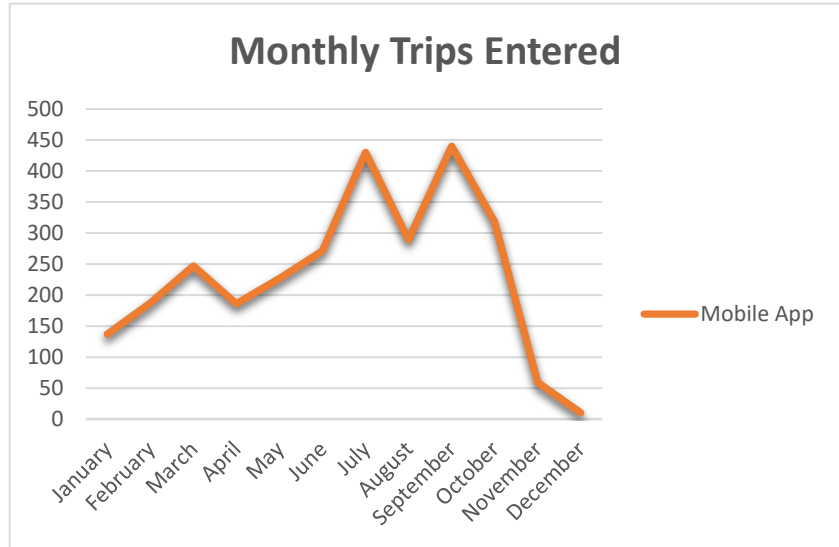
Low compliance rates can be attributed to a variety of factors. 2020 was a particularly tough year to implement the rule with fisheries closures and operational restrictions facing the guide community due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the diversity of business models in the Guide Community, and the challenges facing guides during the 2020 license year it's hard to know what percentage of guides who renewed their licenses actually fished in Washington that year.

Further, the agency experienced and worked to resolve an issue with the Android version of the reporting application in the winter of 2020 which impacted access to mobile reporting in the latter portion of the year. With the unique circumstances facing year one of the reporting requirement and low compliance rates this progress report will look at just year two, 2021 data, including all trips submitted January 1, 2021 – December 27, 2021.



Seasonality of Guide Activity

In 2021, the highest volume of reports submitted were in the months of July and October. A total of 3,955 reports were submitted in 2021 with 2,808 submitted via mobile application and 1,147 submitted via paper logbook.

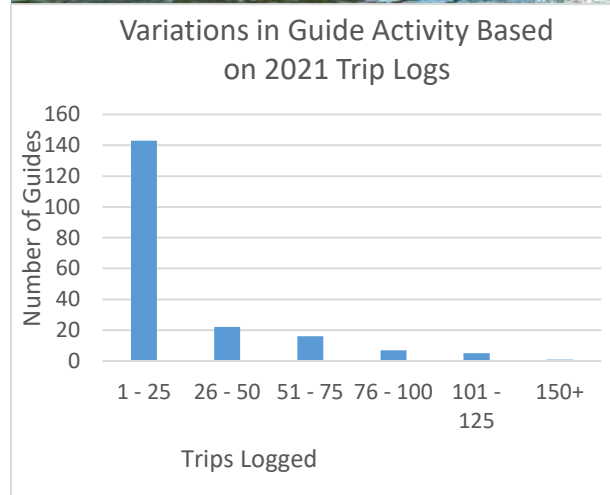


Demographic Trends – what do we know about the guide industry?



As of 2021 we had 502 licensed guides in Washington State. The total number of guides has decreased over the last ten years from a high of 619 in 2011.

The fishing guide industry is diverse in Washington. Some license holders guide full time, moving their operations to different fisheries across the state throughout the year, others guide in multiple states with trips in Washington making up just a portion of their business portfolio. We also have license holders who guide on weekends and work another full-time job. Based on logbook trip report data submitted in 2021, we can see that diversity in activity. The majority of guides who reported (143 guides) logged just 1-25 trips in 2021, far fewer (45 guides) logged between 26 and 100 trips and only six guides logged over 100 trips.



Guide businesses operate throughout the state and many guides travel great distances to participate in fisheries. The tables below show where guides travel from to participate in some of our most popular guide fisheries.



Olympic Peninsula		
Guide County of Residence	# of Trips	State
Clallam	332	WA
King	34	WA
Snohomish	26	WA
Out of State	25	CO
Kittitas	21	WA
Out of State	19	MT
Pierce	9	WA
Grays Harbor	5	WA

Southwest Washington		
Guide County of Residence	#	State
Clallam	88	WA
Clark	72	WA
Yakima	29	WA
Grays Harbor	26	WA
Pierce	25	WA
Cowlitz	24	WA
King	17	WA
Spokane	11	WA
Benton	6	WA
Asotin	5	WA
Out of State	1	OR
Lewis	1	WA

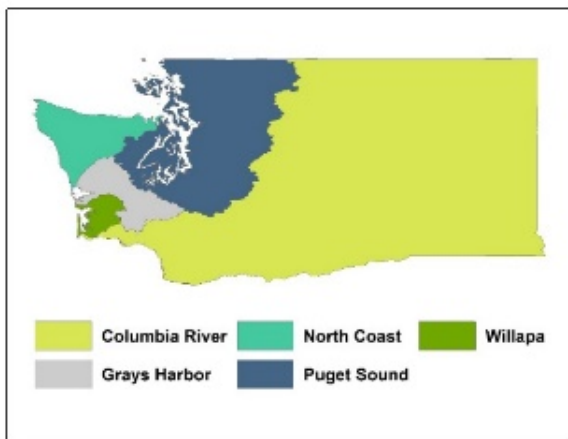
Hanford Reach - CR		
Guide County of Residence	# of Trips	State
Out of State	64	ID
Spokane	61	WA
Grant	26	WA
Benton	21	WA
Douglas	20	WA
Chelan	20	WA
Adams	15	WA
Asotin	14	WA
Out of State	6	OR
Franklin	6	WA

Most of our guide activity occurs in the Columbia River and tributaries like the Cowlitz and Yakima, in Eastside Lakes as well as along the Washington Coast. The average number of clients taken out per guided fishing trip is two or three and based on trip reports, most guides are running just one trip per day (multiple trips make up just 3.5% of the total trips reported).

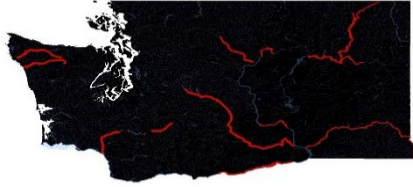
Based on logbooks submitted in 2021, 7,996 individuals took guided trips that year. This makes up less than 1% of the over 807,000 anglers that purchased a fishing license in 2021. The average number of customers taken per guide in 2021 was 58.

Geographic Trends

We looked at trends in reporting across geographic areas, Columbia River, North Coast, Willapa Bay, Grays Harbor, Puget Sound, Eastside Lakes and Westside Lakes. Regions shown in the maps below.



The majority of guided fishing trips in 2021 occurred in the Columbia River Basin, with 2,439 trips reported by 134 guides. The second highest volume region was Puget Sound with 655 reports by 35 guides. See table on reporting trends by area to the right.



Trends by Area		
Area	# Trips	# Guides
Columbia River	2,439	134
Puget Sound	655	35
Eastside Lakes	478	22
Grays Harbor	149	28
North Coast	147	14
Westside Lakes	25	7

Within these regions with high guide activity, the waterbodies with the highest volumes of guides were the Yakima River, the Columbia River (Hanford Reach, McNary – John Day, and Wells to Chief Joseph), the Snake River, Lake Chelan, Sol Duc, Hoh, Lake Roosevelt and the Cowlitz River. The Yakima River had the highest number of total trips (510), the Hanford Reach had the highest number of trips in a day (6.4) and Rainbow Trout and Smallmouth Bass were the most common species encountered.

TOP 10 Waterbodies						
Waterbody	# of Trips	Avg # of Trips/Day	Highest # of Trips in a Day	Date of Highest # of Trips	Most Frequently Encountered Species	# of Encounters
Yakima River	510	2.4	15	16-Sep-21	Rainbow Trout	5463
Columbia River - 536	333	6.4	25	08-Oct-21	Chinook	1130
Snake River	332	1.7	11	12-Sep-21	Smallmouth Bass	4386
Lake Chelan	297	1.7	11	01-Oct-21	Kokanee	2403
Columbia River - 545	250	4.7	11	24-Jul-21	Sockeye	829
Sol Duc River	183	1.9	6	25-Feb-21	Coho	220
Hoh River	175	2.4	6	10-Mar-21	Steelhead	198
Roosevelt Lake	172	1.2	3	07-Oct-21	Walleye	1758
Cowlitz River	168	1.5	9	11-Sep-21	Steelhead	362
Columbia River - 531	148	1.4	5	02-Jun-21	Walleye	3308



Encounters

When looking at species encountered by guides statewide, we pulled data at a broad geographic scale and looked at the top five species encountered in each basin. See a list of most prevalent species encountered by basin below.

Guide Area	Species caught	Total	Total_Retained	Total_Released
Columbia River	Rainbow Trout	7,806	188	7,618
	Walleye	6,287	5,216	1,071
	Smallmouth Bass	5,870	1,584	4,286
	Chinook	3,666	3,113	553
	White Sturgeon	1,199	54	1,145
Guide Area	Species caught	Total	Total_Retained	Total_Released
Grays Harbor	Chinook	31	17	14
	Coho	18	11	7
	Steelhead	15	8	7
	Coastal Cutthroat	3	0	3
	Chum	1	0	1
Guide Area	Species caught	Total	Total_Retained	Total_Released
North Coast	Steelhead	453	10	443
	Coho	273	113	160
	Coastal Cutthroat	117	0	117
	Chinook	81	45	36
	Dolly/Bull Trout	10	0	10
Guide Area	Species caught	Total	Total_Retained	Total_Released
Puget Sound	Pink	1,890	57	1,833
	Coho	443	264	179
	Dolly/Bull Trout	71	1	70
	Chinook	58	46	12
	Coastal Cutthroat	35	0	35
Guide Area	Species caught	Total	Total_Retained	Total_Released
Westside Lakes	Kokanee	504	503	1
	Smallmouth Bass	388	0	388
	Chinook	243	220	23
	Rainbow Trout	207	186	21
	Coho	32	32	0
Guide Area	Species caught	Total	Total_Retained	Total_Released
Eastside Lakes	Kokanee	5,240	5,188	52
	Walleye	4,034	3,765	269
	Rainbow Trout	1,257	760	497
	Lake Trout	1,032	1,029	3
	Burbot	302	293	9





Next Steps

We have work ahead of us implementing this new rule. First, we need to get compliance rates up as close to 100% as possible. We plan to increase compliance with the help of a new enforcement compliance app and emphasis patrols. We are also considering ways to simplify reporting tools to encourage use and improve data quality and increase communication to guides who are out of compliance. Further, the agency and Commission may want to consider licensing restrictions for non-reporting if we continue to see low compliance rates in the years to come.

Fish Program and Enforcement are also working together to identify what (if any) enforcement loopholes may exist that are contributing to non-reporting or our ability to enforce this rule effectively. A deeper dive into compliance rates, logbook data and enforcement contacts will help refine thinking on ways the rule may be improved in order to assist with implementation and enforcement.

Further, the WDFW team is working to link the guide logbook database with the WILD (recreational licensing system) and LIFT (our commercial licensing system) so that we can answer questions around demographics. We are looking at answering questions like;

- ❖ How far did the guide travel from county of residence?
- ❖ How far did the client travel from county of residence?
- ❖ How many people accessed fisheries through guides vs. on their own?



We are also working to pull good local economic data to be able to cross reference with our guide data so we can answer questions about the contributions that the guide industry makes to Washington's local and state economy.

With higher compliance rates, future reports to the Commission will include more information on guide activity, trends, demographics and economic impacts.



Appendix 1: Advisory Committee

Fishing Guide Industry Ad-Hoc Advisory Group

Members Contact List

Name	Affiliation	Email
Robert Kratzer	Anglers Guide Service	Anglersguideservice@gmail.com
Caleb Hitzfeld	CH Fly Fishing	caleb@chflyfishing.com
Patric Gaffney	Gaffney's Guide Service	pgaffney253@gmail.com
Marc Bush	Twister Waters Guide Service	twistedwaters@gmail.com
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Cameron Black	Gone Catching	gonecatchin@gmail.com
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Jeff Brazda	Brazda's Fly Fishing	jeff@brazdasflyfishing.com
Blake Merwin	Gig Harbor Fly Shop	flyfishingblake@gmail.com
Steve Joyce	Red's Fly Shop	steve@redsflyshop.com



Appendix 2: Licensing Data

2011 - 2021 Guide Licensing Data				
LY	Resident	Non-Resident	Unknown	Total Owners
2011	569	49	1	619
2012	564	48	0	612
2013	536	48	0	584
2014	442	53	1	496
2015	468	55	0	523
2016	480	56	0	536
2017	503	64	0	567
2018	487	61	0	548
2019	467	59	0	526
2020	418	54	0	472
2021	445	57	0	502

