

## Agenda Item Summary

### BACKGROUND

A permit issued by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is required for bass fishing tournaments defined by rule as “large” or with more than 24 boats or 49 individual anglers participating. The number of permitted tournaments that can be held on a waterbody each year is also limited by rule and is based on the size of the waterbody.

For most Oregon waterbodies on which bass tournaments are held, the maximum number of permits that can be issued annually is seldom reached. If there is competition for a limited number of permits, the parties involved are encouraged to resolve the conflict among themselves. This has traditionally taken place in the preceding fall at an annual event open to the public and sponsored by the Oregon BASS organization. Individuals and representatives of potential tournament sponsor organizations meet at this event to present their tournament requests for the following calendar year and then cooperatively develop a schedule that accommodates all groups and avoids conflicting dates and locations.

This approach had worked well for many years, but more recently conflicts have arisen, particularly for tournament permits at Tenmile Lakes, recognized by many to be the best bass fishing tournament water in Oregon. The number of permits that can be issued each year for tournaments at Tenmile Lakes is currently limited to six. Because more organizations are now interested in hosting tournaments at Tenmile Lakes and those groups are coming from a larger geographic area, potential sponsors have found it increasingly difficult to resolve conflicts. These parties have requested the Department establish a system by which organizations including those that may not have previously hosted an event at Tenmile Lakes have a fair and equal opportunity each year to obtain a tournament permit. However, the groups also felt it would be appropriate to each year guarantee a permit for those groups who were among the first to host tournaments at Tenmile Lakes and have continued to do so.

The proposed rule changes will establish the new permit system that will apply to all Oregon waters and will include the following provisions:

- Establishes “grandfather” rules in which an organization that has held a tournament continuously for 25 years or more on a specific lake or reservoir will continue to be granted a permit automatically so long as that group meets annual event participation requirements. The organization can lose this right if those requirements are not met, in which case it must apply for a permit under the same process as all competing groups. However, before a grandfather right is revoked, the Department may become involved in determining if outstanding issues such as safety, weather, or other

unforeseeable events beyond the control of the organization would prevent meeting the requirements and preclude revocation of the “grandfather” status.

- If the number of organizations competing for the remaining permits after the grandfather allocation exceeds the number available, then those organizations will participate in a random draw for the remaining available permits.
- Establishes a point system similar to that used for allotment of big game permits by which organizations that are unsuccessful in obtaining a permit earn preference during the next year’s selection process.
- Removes the recognition in rule of the role of the annual Oregon BASS event in determining permit recipients. This event has evolved in recent years and may no longer be the best venue to identify in rule as the event during which the tournament calendar is developed and conflicts resolved. Instead, a new timeline will be established with the Department accepting tournament permit applications beginning November 1 of the year preceding the year in which the proposed tournaments will be held. Requests for tournament permits will then be processed in order of time of receipt at an ODFW office beginning December 15 of that year.

Much discussion was held with the participating groups to determine what period of time would be appropriate to use to identify the organizations that qualify for the “grandfather” rights. Given the history and current record of tournament sponsorship at Tenmile Lakes, staff and the public agreed the 25-year timeline is appropriate. For Tenmile Lakes, this would currently recognize two tournament sponsor organizations: the Tenmile Bass Club and the Umpqua Valley Bass Club.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Discussion and development of the proposed permit allocation process and corresponding changes to rule were discussed at several meetings of the Warmwater Working Group (WWG), the Oregon BASS Jamboree, and during personal communications with various representatives of the organizations currently and potentially competing for the available bass fishing tournament permits at Tenmile Lakes and other potential permit conflict locations.

The WWG is a quarterly meeting hosted by ODFW of staff, individuals, and angling and other organizations with a vested interest in Oregon warmwater fish management and includes representatives of many groups that sponsor bass fishing tournaments.

Staff has continued to attend the annual Oregon BASS Jamboree and have worked with bass tournament host organizations to resolve current scheduling conflicts and to develop the proposed permit system. Staff has also worked with the public and bass tournament host organizations

through personal communication to develop the proposed system.

**ISSUE 1**

**BASS FISHING TOURNAMENT GRANDFATHER RULES**

**ANALYSIS**

These rules were developed to resolve a perennial scheduling conflict at Tenmile Lakes that has grown quite contentious in recent years. User groups and members of the Warmwater Working Group asked ODFW to codify a process that would recognize that long-standing tournaments had special status within the angling community and should be given priority in the permit process. ODFW worked with those user groups and the Warmwater Working Group to develop this solution which, although developed to specifically address the scheduling issue at Tenmile Lakes, should allow application to other waters where bass tournaments scheduling conflicts may exist in the future. Additionally, this proposed rule keeps ODFW's role in scheduling and resolving conflicts at a minimum.

**OPTIONS**

1. Accept the proposed rule changes.
2. Modify the proposed rule changes.
3. Reject the proposed rule changes.

**STAFF  
RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt revisions to the Bass and Walleye Fishing Tournament Rules as proposed by staff in Attachment 3.

**DRAFT MOTION**

I move to amend OAR Chapter 635 Division as proposed by staff in Attachment 3

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 2, 2010