

North Umpqua Summer Steelhead March 29th Workshop Summary

Overview

This document summarizes the outputs from the 2-hour workshop held by ODFW the evening of March 29th, 2022 in Roseburg. Roughly 45 of 100 registered participants shared their feedback through a “World Café” style discussion, in which participants rotated between tables to discuss 5 different themes: Science, Management Actions, Social Values, Participation, and Future Forecasting. The overall objectives were:

1. To include stakeholder input into the development of recommendations for the future hatchery summer steelhead program on the North Umpqua.
2. To create a welcoming space for people to share ideas, learn from each other, and help improve the process of public involvement in ODFW decision-making.

Each table’s discussions were captured by notetakers writing on flipchart paper. Those notes are summarized below for each theme and organized into sub-themes. As with the listening survey, these outputs only reflect the perspectives of those people who heard about the workshop, were engaged enough in the issue at hand to attend, and were able to attend on that date and time. Because there was not time or resources to make this process representative, these findings cannot be generalized to the wider population.

Theme 1: Science

Table objective: to inform ODFW’s future science communication about North Umpqua steelhead.

Guiding questions

- What science or information are you aware of that has been or is currently being done on North Umpqua steelhead?
- What science or information are you aware of that has been done on hatchery and wild fish from other basins?
- What science do you think is missing or could be improved?
- What kind of science do you feel is important for decision-making on this topic?

Participant questions about summer steelhead science

- Genetics
 - What are the impacts of hatchery strays on wild steelhead genetics?
 - How many hatchery fish are straying?
 - Is there a “wild” fish left?
 - How “hardy” are hybrid summer steelhead?
 - Why not integrate wild broodstock in hatchery process?
- Competition
 - How does competition for habitat and resources between hatchery and wild summer steelhead affect summer steelhead?
 - Especially on spawning grounds

- Management
 - Do the impacts change depending on the varied release sites?
 - Benefits of reducing the number of hatchery fish on spawning beds?
- Other factors
 - Need to identify issues outside of hatchery vs. wild fish
 - What is known about other factors involved in wild fish decline?
 - To what degree is the ocean a factor?
 - What is the catch and release mortality?
 - Are there offshore wind power interactions?
 - Non-natives?
 - Temperature?
 - Water conservation?
- Can management of winter steelhead inform management of summer steelhead?
- How can we have “wild” stock without using hatcheries as a tool?

Data gaps raised by participants

- Snorkel surveys and smolt traps
- Hatchbox studies
 - Do hatchboxes work?
- Spawning ground survey
- Fish ladder counts
- Need for more telemetry
- Need for better/continued communication about dam counts
- Focus on what factors contributed to success
- Need for unbiased science
- Let local biologists make decisions
- Need for more local knowledge and more value on local knowledge
- Need for definitive, official study on hatchery fish effects on wild fish
- Value of reporting hatchery catch

Participants’ scientific knowledge and beliefs

- Abundant peer-reviewed research shows the negative effect of mixing hatchery with native fish
- There is a risk of extinction if populations dip further
- Only a couple of genetically pure summer steelhead in North Umpqua watershed
- There are OHRC studies that may apply to North Umpqua – including incubation methods
- Molalla, Clackamas, Deschutes all suffered under hatchery releases
- Value of keeping stray rate down
- 1990s Pepsi telemetry study on summer steelhead

Other notes

- Wild fish to Steamboat Creek
- Genetics – Mike Miller

Theme 2: Management Actions

Table objective: to include stakeholder input into the future of the summer steelhead hatchery program in the North Umpqua.

Guiding questions

- What management actions would you like to see take place for the North Umpqua summer steelhead hatchery program?
- What would you like to see avoided?
- Are there management options that could balance the needs of the fish and the people who are interested in and/or affected by the summer steelhead hatchery program?
- If there are competing priorities, how might those tradeoffs be resolved?

Suggested management actions for summer steelhead hatchery program

- Distribute the release of hatchery fish throughout the river system
- Improve hatchery management (maintenance etc.)
- Draw from colder tributaries above Rock Creek Hatchery as a source?
- Acclimation sites to reduce strays
- Acclimate fish downriver (water temperatures affect die offs)
- More wild in hatchery brood (+1)
- W:W hatchbox?
- Support idea of keeping hatchery and wild separate
 - But not necessarily via elimination of summer steelhead program
- Put lots of hatchery fish in so we can fish them as opposed to not putting enough fish in and we get none. Want to catch as many fish as they do in Alaska.
- Stop hatchery fish above Fall Creek. Stop hatchery fish from spawning with wild fish
- Pause hatchery program of summer steelhead for two generations
- Contrasting opinions: Make sure hatchery fish don't mix with wild fish vs. Put in more hatchery fish even if they stray
- Find a way to minimize hatchery strays
 - Release fish further downstream
- Postpone hatchery program 5 years and see what happens. Back off on program until we understand – be cautious
- Ramp up hatchery fish
- Put hatchery fish where bad habitat and wild where good spawning
- Let's have it both ways
- Manage hatchery die-off better
 - Taxpayer money is being wasted
- Continue, just end summer steelhead
- Stray fish issue
- Distribute hatchery fish and wild fish
- Ramp up hatchery fishing
 - Few wild fish for fishery
- Hatchboxes and smolts at different locations from Flywater to Forks

Suggested management for hatchery overall

- Keep a hatchery in the basin
- Rebuild Rock Creek Hatchery and support basin-reared fish for release
- Analyze better location on North Umpqua for hatchery (i.e. better water quality)
- Further upriver than Rock Creek Hatchery – Soda Springs (x2), Cold Springs
- Rebuild Rock Creek Hatchery or alternative (private \$ if needed)
- Keep fishery open (+1)
- Avoid limiting factors that would affect rebuilding of Rock Creek Hatchery
- Have hatchery be successful like it used to be
 - Worked in the 90s, why not now?
- Public outreach to Rock Creek Hatchery opponents
- Move hatchery program to cooler water or pump cool water

Suggested management of other limiting factors

- Develop a management plan to reduce the threat from invasive species (e.g. bass)
- Look at all users – address all
- Forest/habitat management – water quality and quantity
- Birds (cormorants) and pinnepeds predation
- Lower water temperatures
 - Wild fish and hatchery fish affected by water temperature and climate
- Limiting catch when temperatures too high
 - Have thermal triggers that kick in angling restrictions
- Regulation with catch-and-release – dead drifting from a drift boat
- Protections in sensitive reaches of the North Umpqua

Management actions to be avoided

- Putting all your effort into “wild” fish
- Instituting a total closure (outright) of fishery because there are no hatchery fish to catch (starred)
- Concentrating all hatchery production in one hatchery (i.e. Cole Rivers)
- Avoid minority interests – why do only 7 members decide outcomes
- Avoid cutting back on hatchery fish when water is high

Beliefs about management

- The current approach isn’t working
- 2021 temperature closures supported
- Support hatchery production to have a healthy fish program
- Clock is ticking on rebuilding Rock Creek Hatchery and stock size
- Management isn’t so broken to warrant summer steelhead elimination – don’t take off the table
- Closing program leads to polarization
- Need to work together to solve M&E
- Let’s have it both ways – intermixing may be a compromise
- Without hatchery there will be no fish

- Concerned about the number of summer steelhead that are being caught at Sawyers Rapids because of temperature
- ODFW may not have best interests (provide fishing opportunities mission)
 - Anglers don't care if it's a hatchery or wild fish
- Not convinced hatchery fish are bad – use unbiased statistician to analyze data

Questions about management

- How much interaction is there between hatchery and wild?
 - Are they separated?
- Why is it a problem now and here?
 - Everyone else can't be wrong

Other management ideas

- Invest more in wild fish
 - Decrease PHOS, competition
- Settle hatchery vs wild fish debate without bias or agenda
 - DNA study doesn't solve the problem
- Institute a better fish counting system at Winchester Dam, including “wild” vs hatchery
 - Problems with accuracy, consistency
- Look at more years – time series
- North Umpqua pumps in 1970s rebuild – modernize it
- See spring chinook, STEP South Umpqua Mitigation Program
- Consult long-term locals and guides – 75 years of experience
- No difference hatchery/wild – over 100s years with hatchery input
 - Wild and hatchery fish coexisting for a long time on North Umpqua
- Special interests – steamboaters don't do hatchery fish

Other notes

- What's the plan for Rock Creek Hatchery? Should be one by now
- Would have been better process if assessment 1st
- Big Bend pool has only 1 hatchery per 2 years
- No bias towards hatchery – hatchery fish do go to ocean and return

Theme 3: Social Values

Table objective: to create a shared understanding about why people value North Umpqua summer steelhead.

Questions

- Why are North Umpqua summer steelhead important to you? (Why do you value these fish?)
- What is it about North Umpqua summer steelhead that matters most to you?
- What is it about North Umpqua summer steelhead that matters to others?
- Where are the overlaps between different values? Where are the tensions?

Economic and subsistence

- Commercial interest in future sustainability of North Umpqua summer steelhead
- Economic benefit of the hatchery program
- Timing of the run gives more opportunity (daylight, water quantity)
- Economic benefit of active fishery
- Idelyld Park area benefits from summer steelhead economically
- Subsistence values for tribal members
- Economics – lots of out-of-state interaction from around the world
- Guide income
- Economic impacts – “fish belong to everyone”
- Nobody likes idea of tag dollars increasing with less hatchery fish – “more bang/fish for buck”
- Community/economic impacts
- License sales will suffer from program cuts – guide community, economic

Steelhead are the North Umpqua

- Summer steelhead are the North Umpqua – iconic
- North Umpqua steelhead are famous world-wide. Catching a North Umpqua steelhead is the apex of the fly fishing world. It is sad that the local population, Forest Service, BLM and ODFW are oblivious to this fact.
- Keep the magic. Something special about summer steelhead, their history
- Wild places and wild fish
- Woven into the fabric of the North Umpqua
- Add to cultural tapestry of the North Umpqua
- They come up at their own time when the flowers come out, etc.
- Most famous fishery for summer steelhead
- Summer steelhead are the heart of the North Umpqua – iconic
- North Umpqua has a special feel – grateful it exists
- Love of river/wild fish – special

Having the opportunity to fish and to harvest

- Opportunity to fish them and long-term sustainability of fish and entire ecosystem

- Opportunity to harvest (wild or hatchery) and be outdoors and make memories.
Motivated to harvest
- Harvest and consume
- Phenomenal fish, never leaving here because I love the North Umpqua. Opportunity to harvest hatchery summer steelhead – very important to me. Most I catch are wild and some joy is gone because I can't keep (don't keep wild unless it's going to die). Doesn't fish summer steelhead because of low numbers. Hooking a summer steelhead is indescribable.
- Come here to catch fish, enjoy the beauty
- Love to fish, not many now
- Part of local culture
- Opportunity to fish on the North Umpqua
- Beautiful/convenient
- Nice time of year – good fishing when hatchery numbers are released. Adaptable fishery
- Easier/available to catch – depends on hatchery
- Fun/enjoyable fishery
- Convenient – can fish after work.
- Fun to catch
- Nice weather
- It's a lifestyle, means a lot to people\

A history of fishing and enjoying the personal and social benefits → wanting to protect the fishery for future generations

- North Umpqua summer steelhead are part of a larger picture of fish. Value wild component and support people's interest in wild fish. Value hatchery component for what it offers others. Value family and individual connection to the outdoors, cultural value.
- History of the fish is personal – generational and traditional
- Important to me because it's important to others. Place for both hatchery and wild
- Cultural and ancestral (tribal) values
- Heritage of people living/being around the Umpqua System – generations enjoying the Umpqua. Hopefully pass that on to grandkids. Value both wild and hatchery fish
- Brings camaraderie
- History
- Tradition
- Connection with family
- Part of my social life is fishing. Generational
- See my kids and grandkids catch fish – also want to harvest some – have the opportunity to keep a fish. Future generations
- Loss of interest from younger anglers if hatchery decreases
- For angler – young – “gateway fishery”
- Want to see summer steelhead around in future

Disagreement: How valuable are wild fish?

- A lot of folks don't care about wild/hatchery
- “Fish is a fish” – hatchery or wild

- “wildness is important” – it means a lot to fish for wilds
- Want to see wild fish succeed

Other notes

- Climate change, water temperatures and fire will cause more hatchery fish to go past Rock Creek and go to the upper river
- Very little angling opportunity from Rock Creek to Forks. Need a boat, lots of private property, warm flows
- Beautiful fishery that is being underutilized because of anti-fishing/hatchery interest groups
- Repeat customers – whether or not they catch fish, but would rather catch wild
- Not using to fullest potential
- Most beautiful river – not used to fullest extent
- Releases at different locations on river
- “Tail wagging dog”
- Ghost town at Swiftwater
- Concerned for future wild populations so still need hatchery
- 70k put into reservoir would be a travesty
- Can we release more
- Science proves detriments
- People don’t want hatchery summer steelhead for their table fare – more just want to catch more fish. Will release hatchery fish
- Restore the wild fish to what they were to offer opportunity for harvest in future
- Conflict between rafters and anglers was worked out, share the values
- Hatchery fish concerns with wild
 - Lack of data
- Another fish to fish/season
- Fish require “something big”
- Stop hatchery stops opportunity
- Have huge base of volunteers to help
- Overlap – want to just catch more fish, hatchery or wild
- Wish there were other North Umpqua’s – but there aren’t

Theme 4: Participation

Table objective: to identify opportunities to better engage people who are interested in and/or affected by North Umpqua steelhead issues.

Questions

- How would you like to engage in decision-making issues for North Umpqua steelhead in future?
- Who is missing from this room who should be involved?
- How should we collectively think about engaging the folks who are missing?
- How do we collectively build trusts between different groups who have a stake in these issues?

Perceived participation gaps/needs

- Improve
 - Communication
 - Transparency
 - Education
- Find common ground between stakeholders
- There are a diverse range of stakeholders and some are not well represented
- Honesty between groups – an important virtue
- Re-engage key groups on high-level management within multispecies management plan
- Lack of business represented
- Lack of researchers
- Lack of regular anglers
- Easier process to receive information about ODFW topics
- More guide participation and fishermen in general
- Provide good science-based information
- Consultation with locals and guides
- Build respect
- More commission attendance
- Local commissioner

Stakeholder groups

- Pacific Power
- Guides
- Special interest groups
- General public
- Tribal nations
- Private and public landowners – ag, USGS, BLM
- Anglers and angler clubs
- Audubon Society
- Other watershed users

Ways to connect

- Mass distribution
 - Email
 - Social media
 - Better social media outreach
 - Update ODFW website
 - ODFW flyers
 - Email list of constituents
 - Message board on website
- Group meetings
 - Being in a room together – more community meetings
 - More public meetings with diverse voices
 - Bring diverse groups together in facilitated meetings more often
 - Check in with public
 - Small public meetings
 - Different physical commission locations
- One-on-one interaction
 - ODFW could do more interacting with people by personal interactions – “Put in the time if we expect people to put in their time”
 - Biologists have more public interaction on a personal level
- Surveys
 - Voluntary angling survey
 - More angling surveys with follow-up
 - Face-to-face during angler survey
 - More public surveys, more questions that are not science based

Barriers to participation

- Convincing people it’s worth their time
- We need to put the time in to show folks the respect needed to build trust – so they will put the time in
- No media coverage
- Too short lead time for meeting
- “Decision already made”
- Does our opinion really matter?

Other notes

- Fact checking, downstream data
- Pressure counts
- Closed system
- Openness (info)
- Why is the Umpqua summer steelhead program in question?
- Producing positive results (more fish)

Theme 5: Future Forecasting

Table objective: to anticipate future challenges and opportunities related to North Umpqua steelhead.

Questions

- What are other issues coming down the pike for North Umpqua steelhead that might be relevant or important?
- How could or should we collectively think about prioritizing among these different issues?
- What are the opportunities for people to come together to plan for or manage these future issues facing the North Umpqua?

Future issues anticipated by participants

- Climate change (x2)
 - Climate change – head even last year – drought
- Land use (x2)
 - Some recovery
 - Not sure re: FPA and reduced flows
- Recreation
 - More people = more disturbances
 - More people recreating
 - Effect of rafting/boating on river
 - Stress on holding fish
 - Catch and release
 - Catch and release/ increased angling pressure (out of state) – fish encountered multiple times – delayed mortality
- Commercial fishing – number of guides increasing
- Water quality, quantity, and temperature
 - Water quality is bad in the lower river
 - Hatchery fish are seeking cold water in the upper river
 - Hatchery summer steelhead going to migrate past Rock Creek to get to cool water
 - Water withdrawals legal or otherwise – marijuana grows – hemp
 - Need more ISWRS for fish
 - Water temperature
 - Impacts on hooking mortality
 - Fewer cool water refugia
 - Fires (turbidity)
 - Lower flows
 - Work together on habitat issues
 - Water conservation
- Habitat
 - Over-vegetation → taking water from streams → forest thinning appropriate
 - Proper riparian management/blackberries and scotch broom
 - Habitat will recover
- Loss of historic fire regimes

- Predation and invasive species
 - Smallmouth bass and stripers predation
 - Increased overlap with smallmouth bass
 - Predation – sea lions, cormorants
 - Why are cormorants protected – Bolons Island
 - Smallmouth bass/stripers → public outreach on removal efforts
 - Seals and sea lions affect all fisheries
- Poaching
 - Increased poaching
- Drought – next 5 years going to be painful
- Data gaps
 - Need for real-time counts to manage fishery – funded?
 - Need the dam to have counts
 - Dynamite the dam
 - Assessment of volume of spawning/rearing habitat
 - Any telemetry studies for steelhead → movement of fish up and down basins
 - Need better fish count methods for forecasting – need to be better about positive counts – being more open with the public
 - What is the total mortality → combination of issues
 - Do we need to release more fish to counteract?
- Rock Creek Hatchery
 - Temperatures/disease
 - Proved doesn't work
 - Basin nuked
 - Move upriver – Soda Springs
 - Minimum holding pens
 - Hatchery impacts
- Management
 - Steamboat Falls opened up fishway (40 miles) – impacts on summer steelhead above the falls
 - Mismanagement – agency – segregated hatchery-wild
 - Too little too late on management decisions → retroactive management → do we want to limit angling to protect fish
 - Fish caught bleeding can't keep – if could harvest wouldn't catch as many
 - Look outside of North Umpqua to determine steelhead across history – look at other rivers
- Other
 - Budget
 - Cumulative watershed impacts
 - Shift in winter steelhead (movement of fish) and summer steelhead interaction → winter steelhead outcompete

Other notes

- When we have poor runs – need to supplement
- Need to supplement runs because they are in decline
- Hatchery as conservation tool