



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Salmon & Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) was created by the Oregon Legislature in 1981 to support the recovery and sustainability of the state's native salmon and trout species through citizen volunteer efforts and education. The program is funded through the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program with 25% match funding coming from state dollars. The STEP is overseen by a Governor-appointed, nine-member Salmon Trout Advisory Committee (STAC) made up of regional representatives from across Oregon. The STAC advises the department and Commission on the implementation of the program.

The administrative rules governing STEP have not been updated since 1986. In 2021, staff were directed by leadership to review and update the rules for the STEP program to align the program with current policies and plans that govern the management of salmon and trout resources and develop rules to govern representation on and meetings of the STAC.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Rule development began in 2021. Throughout the process, there have been multiple opportunities for the public to comment on the proposed rules, including the following:

- STAC meetings in February, May, and October 2022 and May 2023
- South Coast Anglers (Coos Bay) meeting in August 2022
- Oregon Anglers Alliance meeting in September 2022
- Discussion of draft rules with Trout Unlimited staff in December 2022
- Gardiner/Reedsport/Winchester Bay STEP meeting in December 2022
- Multiple staff conversations with interested members of the public
- Public webinar in February 2023
- Correspondence and draft rules sent to all nine federally-recognized tribes in Oregon
- Staff presentation to the Tribal Natural Resources Working Group in April 2023

ODFW staff and STAC members engaged the public frequently throughout this rule development process and incorporated new language in the revised rules to reflect comments and concerns that were raised through that public process. The nine Federally-recognized Oregon Tribes were provided drafts of the proposed rules, coordination with the Tribes occurred as requested, and meetings were held multiple times with the Coquille Tribe to address concerns and many of their edits were incorporated into the proposed rules.

ISSUE

Amend rules related to the Salmon & Trout Enhancement Program and the Salmon Trout Advisory Committee

ANALYSIS

To facilitate the administrative rule review and update process, in 2021 staff and members of the STAC formed a subcommittee to work on the rule revisions. This committee included two STAC members, three STEP Biologists, the STEP Coordinator, the Recreational Fisheries Program Manager, and the Fish Division Rules Coordinator. The subcommittee also received input from the Fish Propagation and Conservation and Recovery programs.

The draft rules proposed by the department are provided in Attachment 3, and a detailed summary of the proposed rule changes is provided in Attachment 4.

Updates to the STEP rules incorporate rules specific to the STAC. The proposed rules also bring the program into alignment with existing ODFW plans and policies that govern the management of salmon and trout resources that were not in place when the STEP OARs were last updated in 1986. These plans and policies include the Native Fish Conservation Policy, ODFW Hatchery Management Policy, Climate and Ocean Change Policy, and a variety of Conservation and Recovery Plans. These updates do not reduce or diminish the ability of volunteers to participate in STEP projects that restore Oregon's salmon and trout resources.

Changes include:

- Adding definitions to clarify the proposed rules and removing redundant definitions that are already covered in Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 496.430 and in OAR 635-007-0501.
- Adding 635-009-0096 to clarify the qualifications of STAC members and establish regional representation.
- Adding 635-009-0097 specific to STAC meeting frequency and procedures.
- Adding 635-009-0106 specific to STEP Volunteers.
- Adding 635-009-0107 to clarify that fish propagation projects through STEP must comply with department policies.
- Removing 635-009-0125 through 635-009-0150. This does appear to be a large deletion; however, the proposed deleted language is incorporated in the proposed OAR 635-009-0107 through 635-009-0115.

OPTIONS

1. Adopt staff recommendations
2. Amend staff recommendations

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Option 1.

DRAFT MOTION

I move to approve the administrative rules set forth in Attachment 3.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon filing.