

## Joint-State Columbia River Fishery Policy Review Committee

Narrative Descriptions of Policy Issues, Alternatives and Options under Consideration and Status of Decision-Making Consideration

*August 1, 2019*

Following is an excerpt from the listing of possible policy changes related to non-treaty spring Chinook fisheries as part of the Oregon-Washington review of Columbia River salmon and steelhead fishery management under consideration by the Joint-State Columbia River Fishery Policy Review Committee (PRC) process. Options for the policy issue associated with increasing the stability of upriver recreational spring chinook fisheries that have been introduced for active consideration during the process are listed below, together with a narrative description of identified potential alternatives from current status quo associated with that particular issue. The current status of PRC discussion and/or recommendation on each alternative is also shown, including rationale for any action taken to date to eliminate or de-prioritize an alternative from further consideration at this time.

### **Spring Chinook**

#### **Issue 4: Provide improved season stability for Upriver spring Chinook recreational fisheries**

For the past 15 years, WDFW has heard from southeast Washington stakeholders about the perceived inequity of spring Chinook fisheries above Bonneville Dam and the Snake River compared to below Bonneville Dam. The stakeholders believe they have compelling reasons why WDFW/ODFW and the Fish and Wildlife Commissions should reconsider the current 75%/25% below/above Bonneville recreational allocation policy that guides recreational spring Chinook fisheries in the Columbia River. On July 17, 2018 WDFW staff, IDFG staff (Lance Hebdon), ODFW Staff (Chris Kern), WDFW staff (i.e., Bill Tweit, Ryan Lothrop, Chris Donley) and Washington Fish and Wildlife Commissioners Graybill and Thorburn met with a group of stakeholders in Kennewick, Washington. The meeting focused on discussing methods to increase the number of spring Chinook allocated to above Bonneville Dam fisheries. The input heard at the meeting and resulting correspondence generated the list of concepts presented below. In the end, southeast Washington stakeholders are seeking increased access to spring Chinook above Bonneville Dam with assurances that there is a reasonable recreational fishery above Bonneville Dam every year.

- The basis for allocation is the allowable impacts on constraining ESA listed stocks as follows.
  - Sharing of spring Chinook between lower river and upriver recreational fisheries is based on the allocation of impacts on ESA-listed Upriver spring Chinook allowed for in non-treaty recreational fisheries, with 75% of that allocation currently provided for lower river fisheries and 25% provided to upriver fisheries.
  - Catch sharing of spring Chinook impacts between recreational fisheries from Bonneville Dam to the Oregon-Washington state line area are allocated 10% (40% of 25%) and recreational fisheries in the Snake River are currently allocated 15% (60% of 25%).

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Under the *U.S. v Oregon* Management Agreement, prior to the first run size update from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), non-treaty fisheries will managed for the allowed treaty catch guideline based on a run size that is 70% of forecast (i.e. 30% run size buffer).

### Option 1: Use license sales as the basis for allocation

- Status Quo
  - The basis for allocation is the allowable impacts on constraining ESA listed stocks as follows.
    - Sharing of spring Chinook between lower river and upriver recreational fisheries is based on the allocation of impacts on ESA-listed Upriver spring Chinook allowed for in non-treaty recreational fisheries, with 75% of that allocation currently provided for lower river fisheries and 25% provided to upriver fisheries.
    - Catch sharing of spring Chinook impacts between recreational fisheries from Bonneville Dam to the Oregon-Washington state line area are allocated 10% (40% of 25%) and recreational fisheries in the Snake River are currently allocated 15% (60% of 25%).
    - Under the *U.S. v Oregon* Management Agreement, prior to the first run size update from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), non-treaty fisheries will managed for the allowed treaty catch guideline based on a run size that is 70% of forecast (i.e. 30% run size buffer).
- Alternative 1
  - Rather than the current allocations within the recreational fishery, alter each percentage based on the geographic distribution of Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement purchases in eastern and western counties in both Oregon and Washington. In Oregon, the purchase split is 20% east and 80% west based on 2014-18 sales data. In Washington, the purchase split is about 42% east and 58% west. Combined endorsement purchases are about 30% east and 70% west. During the 2019 Washington legislative session, the Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement was not extended and is currently not required after June 30, 2019. Also, ODFW implemented an electronic licensing system effective in 2019 which affects tracking of geographic sales. Therefore, this analysis of endorsement sales by geographic location cannot be consistently applied in future years with direct comparison to past years.
- Alternative 2

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- Rather than the current fixed percentage allocations within the recreational fishery, alter each percentage based on the place of residence.
- *Status of Consideration: This option was placed in a category of “likely to be removed from the list of active consideration” by the PRC at the March 14 meeting, in part because of discomfort with license sales reflecting allocation and complications due to electronic sales, and origin of out-of-state anglers travelling to destination fisheries.*

#### **Option 2: Use origin of stock as the basis for allocation**

- Status Quo
  - As described above (Option 1).
- Alternative 1
  - Rather than the current fixed percentage allocations within the recreational fishery share, alter each percentage based on where the fish were released (hatchery of origin). This concept was proposed by southeast Washington stakeholders as a method to consider equitably sharing harvest into the upper basin. The logic for this proposal was based on the perception that most of the spring Chinook available for harvest in the Columbia River originate in southeast Washington or further upstream. Southeast Washington residents perceive they have sacrificed the most in resources lost but also in regulatory impact as a result of ESA listings. As such, they believe most of the ESA recovery burden has been placed on their respective geographic area with minimal reward returning in the form of spring Chinook fisheries. The perception is that a minimal amount of the regulatory or economic burden of spring Chinook recovery is placed on the residents below Bonneville Dam, while they receive the greatest recreational and economic benefit. Most of the spring Chinook returning to the Columbia basin above Bonneville Dam originate from hatchery facilities in Idaho and to a lesser extent Oregon.
- *Status of Consideration: This option was placed in a category of “likely to be removed from the list of active consideration” by the PRC at the March 14 meeting in part due to many stocks originating from outside Washington/Oregon waters and annual shifts in production throughout the basin.*

#### **Option 3: Apply buffer only to fisheries below Bonneville Dam**

- Status Quo
  - The buffer is applied to all recreational fisheries (described in Option 1).
- Alternative 1
  - Rather than applying the same Upriver spring Chinook run-size buffer to all fisheries as currently occurs, this concept would not subject

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recreational fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam to the run size buffer, similar to what currently occurs with Select Area commercial fisheries (see description of 30% buffer in Issue 3 – Status Quo).

- *CLARIFICATION NEEDED. Status of Consideration: In preparing for the August 1 PRC meeting, it was unclear if this option had been de-prioritized from further consideration, inactive, or was active for further analysis. This Option is included in the results.*

#### **Option 4: Establish a set season above Bonneville Dam**

- Status Quo
  - Allowed impacts based on current allocation sharing policies are applied to mainstem Columbia River fisheries above and below Bonneville Dam to develop a season structure with a planned end date, which occurs prior to the run update. However, the fisheries are monitored and evaluated during the season and may be closed early, or extended, based on in-season performance. Recreational fisheries in the Snake River start prior to the run update and are also managed in-season based on the run size update and available allocation, but occur later in the year, with the majority of the annual fishery in this area occurring after a run size update.; in-season management can expand planned seasons or cancel them.
- Alternative 1
  - This concept would establish a set-season for fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam.
- *Status of Consideration: Active for further analysis.*

#### **Option 5: Remove the Catch Balance requirements for fisheries above Bonneville Dam**

Since non-treaty spring Chinook fisheries typically use mark-selective fisheries, they are able extract more hatchery fish for harvest with the available ESA impacts when compared to treaty fisheries. The Catch Balance provision of the *U.S. v Oregon* agreement was implemented to cap total non-treaty harvest of upriver spring Chinook so that it does not exceed the number allowed in treaty fisheries. Catch balancing is generally more constraining for recreational fisheries than ESA impacts.

- Status Quo
  - Catch Balancing is applicable to all non-treaty fisheries.
- Alternative 1
  - Under this alternative recreational spring Chinook fisheries upstream of Bonneville Dam would not be subject to the Catch Balance provision under *U.S. v Oregon*.

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- *Status of Consideration: This option was placed in a category of “likely to be removed from the list of active consideration” by the PRC at the March 14 meeting due to Catch Balancing for all non-treaty fisheries being a requirement of U.S. v Oregon. Removing the catch balance requirement for any non-treaty fishery would be inconsistent with the terms of the US v Oregon Management Agreement. Staff note: This option from the public may have assumed that if Catch Balance were not applied to upriver fisheries, the lower river fisheries would need to make up the difference in order to meet the U.S. v Oregon requirements. This aspect was not discussed at the PRC meetings. Analysis of this Option under this revised assumption is included in the analysis/results document.*

#### **Option 6: Limit lower river seasons to five days per week**

- Status Quo
  - No restriction on days per week in lower river fisheries.
- Alternative 1
  - This alternative would set restrictions on the number of days per week in the recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam.
- *Status of Consideration: Active for further analysis*

#### **Option 7: Measure benefit based on harvest instead of economic value**

- Status Quo
  - Allocations are based on the values described in the status quo section of Option 1. Economic value are not the driver of allocation.
- Alternative 1
  - This concept relates to the belief by southeast Washington stakeholders that the economic value of the fishery below Bonneville Dam for spring Chinook drives the current 75%/25% allocation split. Anglers in the upper basin believe that the ESA allocation should be more equitable and allow for a greater number of the fish to pass over Bonneville Dam and be subject to fisheries in both Zone 6 and the Snake River, thus allowing those fish to be harvested closer to where they originated. Some stakeholders in southeast Washington believe that increasing harvest upriver will have greater economic benefits for smaller rural economies in southeast Washington and northeast Oregon.
- *Status of Consideration: Active for further analysis.*

#### **Option 8: No lower river extension beyond pre-season plan**

- Status Quo
  - Extensions are allowed as a normal in-season measure.
- Alternative 1

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- This option sets restrictions on operation of the recreational fishery below Bonneville Dam by not allowing fisheries extensions prior to the run update. Proponents of this option intended for no fishery extension in the lower river prior to a run update.
- *Status of Consideration: Active for further analysis.*

#### **Option 9: Annual payback to upriver fisheries for lower river fishery overage the year prior**

- Status Quo
  - The allocation formula is used each year regardless of the prior year outcomes as described in Option 1.
- Alternative 1
  - This option would allow for increase in upriver allocation in one year if lower river fisheries exceeded their allocation in the previous year.
- *CLARIFICATION NEEDED. Status of Consideration: In preparing for the August 1 PRC meeting, it was unclear if this option had been de-prioritized from further consideration, inactive, or was active for further analysis. This Option is included in the results.*

#### **Option 10: Annual payback to lower river fishery for foregone opportunity resulting from implementing strategies intended to safeguard upriver fisheries**

- Status Quo
  - There are currently no “payback” accounting procedures when upriver fisheries do not use their full allocation. The allocation formula in place is used each year regardless of prior year outcome as described in Option 1.
- Alternative 1
  - This concept is would transfer unused upriver allocated impacts from the upriver to the lower river the following year. This scenario would increase allocation to the lower fisheries and decrease allocation for upriver fisheries.
- *CLARIFICATION NEEDED. Status of Consideration: In preparing for the August 1 PRC meeting, it was unclear if this option had been de-prioritized from further consideration, inactive, or was active for further analysis. This Option is included in the results.*