CCA Washington Pushes Puget Sound Selective Fishing

Heath Heikkila  
CCA Pacific Northwest Fisheries Director

CCA Washington has recently taken an active role in advocating for a selective saltwater sport fishery for Puget Sound Fall chinook. The effort was initiated in response to an ill-conceived proposal to permit freshwater tribal gillnet and sport fisheries on Lake Washington targeting Fall chinook, an ESA-listed stock. While the freshwater fisheries were being proposed to target surplus hatchery returns, significant impacts to wild origin spawners were likely due to their non-selective nature. The primary supporters of the tribal gillnet fishery was the Muckleshoot Tribe.

On April 28, 2008 CCA Washington raised serious concerns about the proposal in a letter to state and federal fisheries management officials. At the same time, CCA proposed a catch and release fishery in the cooler waters of Shilshole Bay to target surplus hatchery returns, which can have a negative impact on wild origin spawners through excessive straying. A Shilshole Bay terminal sport fishery would be consistent with CCA policy positions related to the importance of selective fishing and hatchery reform implementation in salmon recovery efforts.

It appears that in the face of organized opposition from CCA, other sports groups and elected officials, the proposed non-selective Lake Washington fishery was ultimately shelved for this year. Despite strong public support, the CCA-supported Shilshole Bay terminal sport fishery seems to have fallen victim to objections raised by the Muckleshoots to WDFW. Pat Pattillo, WDFW salmon policy coordinator, commenting on the objection to the Seattle Times stated, “we felt it was a responsible fishery, and what we got was their flat rejection with no rationale.” (July 7, 2008 Outdoors Notebook.)

CCA Washington will continue to push for selective salmon fisheries in the days and months to come through active engagement with elected officials, WDFW Commissioners and agency staff. CCA firmly believes that efforts to restore depleted and ESA-listed stocks of wild salmon and steelhead will only be successful if fishing practices are reformed to take advantage of past and future hatchery, hydro and habitat improvements.

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In response to requests from last year’s participants, the following statement was developed as a guiding light for the process:

The purpose of this stakeholder group is to develop recommendations regarding a lower Columbia River spring and summer salmon fishery management plan including future allocation of allowable harvests of salmon between the commercial and recreational fisheries.

The goal of opening the lines of communication between traditionally adversarial groups was admirable. However, the process and the spirit of the mission statement turned out to be a vision for keeping things the same rather than a commitment to meaningful change. In mid-June, many of the groups representing recreational interests – including CCA – left the table out of frustration with the shift away from the effort’s original intent.

You see, the goal of creating a long-term vision with the input of all stakeholders quickly veered toward a 10-year fisheries management plan that locks in allocation rates and guarantees the status quo for gill netters for another decade. That is completely unacceptable.

Once again, the emphasis is on how to divide up an increasingly scarce resource rather than a true vision toward conservation and sustainable recovery. We can’t even begin to consider salmon recovery on the lower Columbia River until we explore alternatives to gill netting. This wasn’t even considered as a reasonable discussion point throughout the process.

Our Pacific salmon fisheries are collapsing all around us, yet we still have people who are in denial that it is time for real change. Unfortunately, many of these people are in positions of leadership in terms of fisheries management, and they don’t seem willing or able to consider options for recovery. A 10-year plan that locks in allocation for gill netters wouldn’t even see the end of a decade – my guess is that the fishery would completely collapse within the first five years.

It’s time to move this battle to another field, one that engages other stakeholders besides commercial and sport fishermen. We can no longer participate in this forced march toward extinction, and I encourage you to get involved at the chapter level, with your local committees and help spread the word about CCA and the need for harvest reform.

CCA Oregon Adopts Position Statements

The Board of Directors for CCA Oregon recently approved the positions listed below, which were carefully crafted by members of Oregon’s Government Relations Committee and submitted to the board for approval. These positions – and those added in the future – will serve as an important foundation for shaping CCA policies. The content has been edited for space, and the full text for positions adopted by CCA Oregon and CCA Washington can be found at www.ccapnw.org.

• CCA Oregon Position on Harvest Methods
  “CCA Oregon strongly opposes the use of non-selective harvest methods.”

• CCA Oregon Position on Harvest Management
  “CCA Oregon supports harvest plans focused on conserving and protecting northwest wild salmon and steelhead stocks and opposes harvest plans that do not adequately protect ESA-listed salmon and steelhead.”

• CCA Oregon Position on Derelict Fishing Gear
  “CCA Oregon supports efforts to locate and remove existing derelict fishing gear. We also support sanctions intended to reduce lost fishing gear and provide for timely removal should it occur.”

• CCA Oregon Position on Hatchery Funding and Reform
  “CCA Oregon supports the important role hatcheries have to play in conserving, sustaining, and rebuilding salmon and steelhead stocks. We also support efforts to improve the efficacy of hatchery programs.”

• CCA Oregon Position on Catch Monitoring and Evaluation
  “CCA Oregon supports the development and implementation of systematic catch monitoring processes to determine harvest impacts on non-target species. We support mandatory independent monitoring and evaluation of commercial harvest whenever depleted and/or ESA-listed salmon and/or steelhead stocks are present.”

• CCA Oregon Position on Nutrient Enrichment of the Freshwater Ecosystem
  “CCA Oregon supports the deliberate distribution of hatchery salmon carcasses and/or analogs for the purpose of increasing marine nutrients in freshwater ecosystems where such increase would benefit the ecosystem. We also support natural nutrient enrichment through elevated escapement goals.”

• CCA Oregon Position on Predation
  “CCA Oregon supports science-based efforts to decrease the impacts of predation on adult and juvenile fish populations including salmon, steelhead and sturgeon. Many predator populations have reached artificial and unnatural levels due to human actions and conflicting laws.”

Thank You Matt Kayser

Matt Olson, President, CCA Washington
John Stic, President, CCA Oregon

Matt Kayser has resigned as the executive director of CCA in the Pacific Northwest, and an aggressive, national search has commenced for a qualified replacement.

CCAs regional management committee will work with Jennifer Reed, the office manager for CCA in the Pacific Northwest, to ensure the smooth operation of the organization’s day-to-day business activities.

We greatly appreciate the contributions that Matt has made to help strengthen CCA in Oregon and Washington, especially his efforts to help make our most recent banquet season a great success. We hope you will join us in wishing him all the best in his future endeavors.

The many volunteers involved in CCA’s establishment and subsequent growth in the Pacific Northwest are committed to the organization’s success in this region. Volunteer involvement is a hallmark of CCA chapters throughout the country, and that commitment is what will keep the organization strong in the Pacific Northwest.
CCA Oregon Solidifies Message and Strategy with Position Statements

I want you to know that your Government Relations Committee is working very hard on these and other issues. Each position statement was developed after extensive consultation and research. Each will provide the anchor point for a variety of activities ranging from public awareness and information campaigns, dialog with state and federal resource managers, as well as legislative and legal action. Since each has been fully endorsed by your state board, they now are a matter of public record. As such, you may find them to be helpful to use as “talking points” in your conversations about CCA. (Full text is posted on the ccapnw.org website for your access and use.)

On another subject, elsewhere in this edition of The Ripple Effect you will find remarks from CCA Washington President Matt Olson regarding the “harvest” of Columbia River Sockeye salmon. I have heard from a number of you expressing a sense of anger and frustration over our fisheries managers’ decision to open up this particular run to gill nets and recreational fishing. I have submitted a similar statement to the press which was recently run on the opinion page of the Statesman Journal in Salem. We will continue to follow this and other harvest management issues in the days ahead.

Finally, I would like to share a comment that I recently heard outside of “CCA circles” recently. The speaker, an active and well-respected conservationist, said of our organization, “CCA is the 800 pound gorilla in the room, and everybody knows it.” While that characterization may be flattering, it is important to place in proper perspective.

We set out to grow CCA in the Pacific Northwest for one reason: to conserve our salmon and steelhead resources believed by many of us to have moved perilously close to the point of no return. To be effective we know that we would need to grow in size and manage our organization with discipline and deliberation. We also know that we needed to raise the funds required to offset years of influence wielded by interest groups whose priorities do not include preservation and recovery of the fish.

Unlike the aforementioned gorilla, we cannot succeed by literally throwing our weight around. That is why we will proceed with thoughtfulness and respect for process at all levels. And that is why your support for CCA through involvement at the local chapter and state levels, continues to be so important.

Oregon President’s Message

Doug Ruhl
Oregon CCA President

If you have a copy of the first or second issues of The Ripple Effect hanging around, try this little exercise. Pull out one of those early copies and place it next to the one you are reading right now. Take a look at more of the artwork you are left with. I think you’ll agree with me that at present “there’s a whole lot of shakin’ goin’ on!”

For example, the Oregon State Board of Directors has now reviewed and approved a total of eight position statements. These statements are declarations of issues that CCA Oregon, through the diligent work of its Government Relations Committee, has deemed to be of high priority in the fight to conserve our marine resources. They may be likened to the “planks” in a political party’s campaign strategy. They touch, in one way or another, on the interests of recreational fisherman and conservationists from one end of the state to the other.

Listed topically, these position statements explain CCA Oregon’s positions on:

- Non-selective harvest methods
- Predation of marine species
- Catch monitoring and evaluation
to determine harvest impacts
- Nutrient enrichment of the freshwater ecosystem
- Hatchery funding and reform
- Derelict fishing gear
- Harvest plans supporting protection of ESA-listed salmon and steelhead
- Marine Reserves

The last position statement, outlining our stand on Marine Reserves, is discussed in more detail in Bruce Polley’s article. To his remarks, let me add that we affirm the guiding principles of the Coastal Conservation Association, which are that we advocate for the resource, secondly, for management decisions supported by science, and finally, on behalf of recreational anglers. The CCA position on Marine Reserves clearly empha-
sizes the second principle. This will be the basis for our opposition to present proposals to set aside Marine Reserves off our Oregon Coast.

Bruce Polley
Oregon Government Relations Committee

There is an effort in Oregon proposing new and permanent marine reserves that could eliminate many, if not all, recreational fishing uses in these designated areas...forever. The supporters of these proposed marine reserves have not clearly identified a need or specific biological reason for such dramatic management measures.

Nationally, Coastal Conservation Association has long supported use of time and area closures to protect spawning aggregation areas, possession limits, size restrictions, quotas, or closed seasons will not adequately address the targeted conservation problem.

"CCA Oregon believes that common-sense measures such as creel limits, season regulations, size limits, time and area closures and gear restrictions can effectively be used to maintain healthy marine ecosystems," said John Stec, President of CCA Oregon. "As proposed, these pending marine reserves are designed to circumvent public process and sensible management. CCA Oregon will continue to be active in addressing this issue.”

CCA Oregon advocates the following as it pertains to marine reserves:

CCA believes that recreational fishermen should not be excluded from public fishing areas unless…

- there is a clear indication that recreational fishermen are the cause of a specific conservation problem and that less severe conservation measures, such as gear restrictions, possession limits, size restrictions, quotas, or closed seasons will not adequately address the targeted conservation problem.

- the closed-area regulation includes specific, measurable criteria to determine the conservation benefit of the closed area on the affected stocks of fish and provides for a timetable for periodic review of the continued need for the closed area at least once every three years.

- the closed area is no larger than that which is supported by the best available science.

- provision is made to reopen the closed area to recreational fishing whenever the targeted conservation problem no longer exists.

The use of no-fishing zones ignores modern fishery management techniques and instead presents a one-size-fits-all management measure that bans all fishing in a specific area, forever. CCA requests that any proposals for marine reserves be examined closely to determine if the designation of a marine reserve is the only viable solution to a fishery management problem, or if other, less extreme measures will suffice.

“Recreational anglers are staunch advocates for the conservation of marine resources and the protection of habitat,” said Stec. “However, marine reserves represent an approach that is counterproductive. Science-based standards must be met before our marine waters can be closed to recreational fishing.”

CCA Oregon Takes a Stand for Proper Management of Coastal Resources

Brian Johnson
Washington CCA President

CCA Washington supports fish population management practices that are endorsed by the scientific community and the public agencies that manage our natural resources. This is the only approach that can achieve restoration and sustainability in our fisheries and ecosystems.

Finally, I would like to share a comment that I recently heard outside of “CCA circles” recently. The speaker, an active and well-respected conservationist, said of our organization, “CCA is the 800 pound gorilla in the room, and everybody knows it.” While that characterization may be flattering, it is important to place in proper perspective.

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Eyes in the Woods – Ours will Help

Seth Norman
North Puget Sound Chapter

“Wildlife does not belong to the poacher, the thief!” Bruce Bjork, Chief of Enforcement Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Spread thin describes WDFW Enforcement staffing levels the way “whosopass” applies to an oil spill. Or that was the conclusion drawn by members of CCA’s new North Puget Sound Chapter during a July 10 Crime Observation Reporting Training (CORT) session, conducted by Officers Ryan Valentine and Jeff Lee at Sportsman’s Warehouse in Burlington, WA. Specifically, a total of two land-based Fish & Wildlife officers police Whatcom County. Four cover Skagit, but that includes a sergeant tasked with administrative duties.

From the incidents reported by CCA members—of illegal gill nets in the Nooksack River, taking salmon and steelhead, of gill nets in Lake Whatcom set for protected cutthroat trout; of sniggers in full-barbed bolder on our rivers—you’re more likely to see a poacher in action than to have your license checked.

That’s preciously why CORT is so important. Part of the larger “Eyes in Woods” volunteer program, its essential mission is to develop what Bruce Bjork, Chief of Enforcement for WDFW describes as “a cache of trained volunteers...willing to report fish and wildlife crimes, vandalism on private property”; and, (if they choose) to testify against these scoff-laws. “People need to believe that reporting a wildlife crime is the right thing to do. None of us would sit idly by while our neighbor’s home was being burglarized...the wildlife of this state belongs to all of us.”

Along those lines, Officer Lee suggests “Think of ‘Eyes in the Woods’ as a kind of outdoor neighborhood watch.” And it’s sportsmen and women who often watch best, observing what others do not, “People who fish and hunt know the seasons,” says Officer Valentine. “They know what kinds of fish are fair game. They know the limits, legal fishing methods; they can be lots more specific about where they are on a river!” In short, add a few minutes of practice, forethought and preparation to the skills we employ in our sport, and we’re often just what a strapped enforcement department needs.

Note that observing—getting the best information out, quickly, into the right hands—should not suggest acting out a SWAT routine. Confrontation is unnecessary. “That’s our job,” says Valentine, “and we’re ready to do it, believe me. But calls giving us the nature of a violation—a place, a vehicle make and model, a license plate if possible, whatever (physical traits) you notice about the person, their clothing or gear. Maybe even something you hear somebody say, like a name. We make cases based on this kind of information all the time.”

Another aid Valentine suggests: a small pad and pencil, to make quick notes. “Use it as a fishing log—you’ll be surprised how helpful it is. And if you happen to see something, it will sure help you keep track of the details you might otherwise forget.”

He adds a caveat, with feeling. “Please...if you make a report that gives us what we need to come in, please don’t announce what you’ve done. As in ‘I just called Fish and Game, pal! You want! Because they won’t wait. Or if they do, when we arrive all we’ll find is an empty cooler”.

Reporting, however, is only the beginning: there’s a more important role for sportsmen and women today. “Truth is, that—even more than staffing—what would help is (increased) support from the criminal justice system.” That translates to electing prosecutors and judges willing to apply sentences already mandated by law, which rarely happens today. Also, to insist legislators build up penalties often so soft and deflated they now resemble the “late dues” of a library fine.

That ought to provoke this question: do you know the fish enforcement positions of your own locally elected law enforcement representatives—sheriff or chief of police? Of your prosecutor’s office, judges, state legislators? Have you made your feelings known to those in office? Tied the court’s traditional largesse to poachers to the naked realities of diminishing salmon and steelhead returns? Come the next election, will you ask?

Wildlife shouldn’t “belong to the poacher, the thief.” But if we don’t act to protect this resource, they take from us today what little wildlife will be left for our kids. ☀

Learn more about the Eyes in the Woods at http://www.eyesinthewoods.org/CORT.htm or email fish@eyesinthewoods.org.

The North Puget Sound Chapter of CCA would like to thank Sportsman’s Warehouse and Bob Campbell, Manager, for their support.
The president's message continues...
Whether we're on the bank, in a boat or in a hearing testifying on behalf of Sportfishing we're committed to the success of N.W. Sportfishing and the sport you love.

At Three Rivers Marine &Tackle, you'll see that commitment the moment you walk in the door. You'll see that commitment in every premium bait, tackle and specialized equipment we offer. You'll see that commitment in our knowledgeable staff...who know the water, the fish and the success of N.W. sportfishing and the sport you love.

Fishing's a fulltime job at Three Rivers Marine &Tackle.

Whether we're on the bank, in a boat or in a hearing testifying on behalf of Sportfishing we're committed to the success of N.W. Sportfishing and the sport you love.

At Three Rivers Marine &Tackle we support the sport you love.
Coastal Conservation Association Membership Application

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❑ Renewal Dues  ❑ New Membership

Name ____________________________________________________________
Associate Member Name(s) (if applicable) ____________________________
Member ID# (if renewing) __________________________________________
Address _________________________________________________________
City ____________________________ State ________ Zip ________________
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Gift Membership From: ____________________________________________

❑ $25 MEMBER: Membership card, window decal, 2 bumper stickers, TIDE magazine.
❑ $100 MEMBER: All of the above plus CCA print of your choice
❑ $15 ASSOCIATE: Per each family member. All member privileges except TIDE. Send names.
❑ $200 SPONSOR: Bronze lapel pin, print, plus member gifts.
❑ $500 PATRON: Silver lapel pin, print, plus member gifts.
❑ $1,000 LIFE MEMBER: Life Member display piece, print, plus member gifts. Quarterly payment option available.
❑ $10 NEW TIDE: Rising Tide newsletter, three NEW TIDE logo decals, iron-on T-shirt transfer, redfish & speckled trout sticker. For members 17 and younger.

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Complete this form and send to:
Coastal Conservation Association
1006 W. 11th Street
Vancouver, WA 98660
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Sunset over a salmon stream.
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