



December 10 WDFW Commission Meeting - Background

On Saturday, December 10 the WDFW Commission will be reviewing the [Columbia River fishery reform policy](#). As we approach the end of a four-year transition period, the gillnet lobby is pulling out every stop to block the bi-state compromise reforms. The Oregon Commission – under the influence of the gillnet industry’s former lobbyist turned Oregon fish and wildlife commissioner – recently voted to block the plan’s implementation for a year. Oregon’s efforts focused on increasing the profits of the commercial gillnet industry at the expense of all the other key tenants of the reforms – including improved conservation of Columbia River salmonids.

It is critical that the WDFW Commission stand strong and faithfully implement the plan. WDFW staff is briefing the Washington Commission on [three options](#) for utilizing adaptive management to revise the policy in 2017 and beyond. In doing so, the Commission must reject efforts to rewrite the underpinnings of the plan, including commercial economics (the bi-state reforms set a \$3.86 million commercial ex-vessel value as the baseline for measuring commercial economics) and not ignore the harvest taking place in the off-channel areas (recent off-channel harvests have had average annual ex-vessel values of \$2 million). Summaries of the three options:

Option 1: Extend Transition Period

- Similar to Oregon’s recent action, this would block the plan from being fully implemented in 2017
 - Non-selective gillnets remain legal in mainstem commercial fisheries in spring, summer, and fall
 - Increased allocations for recreational fisheries – the mechanism for implementing the mainstem recreational priority – will also be rolled back
- Estimated average commercial industry ex-vessel value of \$5.86 million – 152% of the plan’s baseline

Option 2: ODFW Staff Proposal

- Maintains most mainstem commercial gillnet fisheries in 2017 and beyond
 - Spring: Mainstem tanglenet fisheries continue (within 80/20 allocation)
 - Summer: Requires selective gear for any mainstem commercial fisheries (also 80/20 allocation)
 - Fall: Permanently allows mainstem gillnet use in Zones 4-5 - above the Lewis River (freezes allocation at 70/30)
- Includes increased spring Chinook production for off-channel commercial fisheries and provides incentives for lower river selective fisheries during the fall
- Estimated average commercial industry ex-vessel value of \$5.8 million – 150% of the plan’s baseline

Option 3: Current Policy for 2017

- Implements the policy as written in 2017, including gillnet restrictions and prioritized recreational allocations
 - Spring: No mainstem commercial fisheries and increased recreational opportunity below and above Bonneville Dam (minimum of 80/20 allocation)
 - Summer: TBD – original policy left this undetermined
 - Fall: Gillnets restricted to off-channel areas. Access to valuable Upriver Brights provided through seine fisheries in Zones 4-5 (current policy allows adaptive management to permit continued gillnet harvest to maintain value of Zones 4-5 commercial harvests).
- Prioritizes the development of selective commercial fisheries and commits to measures to commercial buybacks and fleet reduction policies.
- Estimated average commercial industry ex-vessel value of \$3.7-\$4.7 million - 96% to 122% of the baseline



December 10 WDFW Commission Meeting - Talking Points

Make Your Testimony Personal

- Explain why Columbia River salmon and steelhead fisheries matter to you, your family, and our region.
- Clearly state your opposition to proposals to rewrite the bi-state agreement by putting increased gillnet industry profits ahead of the key purposes of the bi-state plan.
- Remind them of the years of controversy over the use of gillnets and the need to end their use.

Highlight Conservation Concerns

- Non-selective gillnets don't belong in the mainstem of the lower Columbia River where 13 ESA-listed salmonid stocks migrate en route to their native rivers and streams.
- Gillnets have been banned across the world due to their bycatch of non-target species. In the Columbia River this includes depressed sturgeon and steelhead populations.
- In the Columbia River we need fisheries capable of selectively harvesting hatchery fish and releasing depressed and ESA-listed wild stocks if we want to meet ESA obligations and maintain hatchery production.

Remind Them About Economics

- Columbia River basin salmon and steelhead sport fisheries are worth over \$30 million dollars to our regional economy and are responsible for tens of thousands of jobs – unfortunately, these fisheries are frequently constrained by non-selective mainstem gillnet fisheries.
- Lower Columbia River gillnet fisheries in Oregon and Washington have an average annual ex-vessel value of about \$3.5 million. Of the roughly 100 Washington gillnet licenses, only 9 had landings greater than \$20,000; 65% have landings of less than \$10,000.

Raise Issues of Fairness

- Over 200,000 Washington anglers purchase the Columbia River Endorsement annually – generating over \$10 million in license, endorsement, and excise tax revenue for WDFW. By comparison, the non-tribal gillnet fleet generates less than \$300,000 in revenue for the state.
- Let them know how standing firm on the policy will affect your support of WDFW, which is proposing to increase license fees for Columbia River salmon and steelhead anglers by 70%.
- Columbia River basin salmon are harvested commercially in Alaska, Canada, off the Washington coast before Columbia River treaty tribes are entitled to harvest half of the remaining salmon. These tribal caught salmon are also made available for consumption by the general public.
- The policy recognized the importance of providing the 375,000 Columbia River basin sport anglers in Oregon and Washington prioritized opportunity for the limited salmon remaining after extensive commercial/tribal harvest.