2017 will go down as a pivotal year for recreational anglers in Washington State. After recent successes growing our political and legislative influence, we stand at a crossroads. One road leads right back to the days when our opinions were largely dismissed by WDFW leadership, elected officials, and fisheries policy was set by a handful of well-connected commercial interests. The other path builds on recent reforms that put conservation first and recognize the economic and license fee contributions of hundreds of thousands of recreational anglers whose voices politicians and agency officials ignore at their own peril.

Now more than ever we must come together as recreational anglers to ensure a better future for our fisheries – whether we fish the coast, Puget Sound, or the Columbia River. That starts with important policy decisions related to the bi-state Columbia River gillnet reforms and restoring fairness to the North of Falcon Puget Sound salmon season-setting process. The 2017 legislature will also consider WDFW’s request for a significant recreational license fee increase – another venue for securing budget and policy reforms that recognize the contributions of anglers by enhancing and prioritizing recreational fisheries.

After this year’s North of Falcon, I know many Puget Sound salmon anglers have little reason for optimism. I don’t blame them. The state-tribal co-management system in Puget Sound is broken and unfair. Recreational anglers have paid the price through one-sided, arbitrary closures of fisheries and entire rivers to sport fishing. When North of Falcon negotiations broke down this spring, we saw how the federal government has been complicit in the creation of an uneven playing field for state-tribal negotiations. Puget Sound was closed to salmon sport fishing, it was business as usual for some tribal fisheries.

Over the past decade, state-tribal fishing agreements adopted through North of Falcon have resulted in tribal fisheries harvesting about 65% of the available Chinook and Coho salmon – far more than the 50-50 split mandated by the Boldt Decision. You can bet the percentages will be more lopsided when the totals are tallied for this year’s fisheries. While allocations are important, the real measurements for anglers are fishing opportunity and certainty – both of which have declined dramatically in Puget Sound.

There is some reason for optimism though. First, there is finally widespread recognition of the inequity – even by many treaty tribes. It was just a few years ago that WDFW officials sought to convince the public that no problem existed. Director Unsworth seems to understand that the current situation is unsustainable for Puget Sound fisheries and WDFW’s budget as the agency faces stiff opposition to a proposed license fee increase from understandably upset recreational anglers. WDFW believes it has the agreement of the Feds and the Tribes on a different approach to North of Falcon that will avoid another train wreck next spring. We’ll know early in 2017 whether progress has been made to restore greater equity, or if it is groundhog’s day all over again.

Here on the Columbia River, the moment of truth will come over...
Following a 4-year transition period, the bi-state Columbia River gillnet reforms are scheduled to be fully implemented next year. It is critical that WDFW and the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission stand firm against gillnet industry efforts in Oregon to gut the plan’s promises. Please attend the WDFW Commission meeting on Saturday, January 14 in Vancouver. Check WDFW’s website for additional details.

This marquee decision comes at the same time WDFW is proposing to increase recreational fishing license fees. Below are just a few reasons why it is important that the Columbia River gillnet reforms are implemented as promised.

**Conservation**

- Non-selective gillnets don’t belong in the mainstem of the lower Columbia River, home to over a dozen ESA-listed salmon and steelhead species.
- Gillnets have been banned across the world due to their bycatch of non-target species. In the Columbia River this includes depressed populations of sturgeon, steelhead, wild Chinook, wild Coho, wild Chum and wild Sockeye.
- In the Columbia River we need fisheries capable of selectively harvesting hatchery fish and releasing depressed and ESA-listed stocks of wild salmon, steelhead and other non-target species.

**Economics**

- Columbia River basin salmon and steelhead sport fisheries are worth over $30 million to our regional economy and are responsible for thousands of jobs – unfortunately, these fisheries are frequently constrained by mainstem gillnet fisheries.
- Although they once harvested millions of pounds of salmon annually, the Lower Columbia River gillnet fishery is no longer a viable industry (see “Did You Know?” on page 5).

**Fairness**

- Over 200,000 Washington anglers from across the state purchase the Columbia River Endorsement annually – generating over $10 million in license, endorsement, and excise tax revenue for WDFW. By comparison, the non-tribal Columbia River gillnet fleet generates less than $300,000 in revenue for the state.
- WDFW is proposing to almost double license fees to Columbia River salmon and steelhead recreational anglers and at the same time proposing an overall decrease in fees for gillnet fishers.
- The 375,000 Columbia River basin sport anglers in Washington and Oregon are seeking prioritized opportunity for the limited salmon that remain after extensive commercial and tribal harvests. Columbia River basin salmon are harvested commercially in Alaska, Canada, Washington coast, Oregon coast and in tribal fisheries.
Proposed License Fee Increase Causes Concern for Anglers

With a large fee increase proposal from WDFW on the table for the 2017 legislative session, anglers are voicing concern over management equality and opportunity issues. The current proposal could mean increases for many salmon and steelhead anglers in the range of seventy percent over 2016 fee rates. CCA has always supported funding for our fisheries and hatcheries. We’ve also called for reforms to ensure that WDFW’s policies and management decisions are consistent with the conservation and economic benefits of recreational fisheries.

CCA Positions

Recreational anglers are already the single largest funding source for WDFW – this would grow significantly under the fee increase proposal. This growing reliance on recreational license fee revenue should be accompanied by corresponding policy and budget initiatives that clearly prioritize and increase recreational fishing opportunity.

• **Equality:** After years of general fund cuts to WDFW, it is unfair to ask the recreational community to subsidize activities that benefit commercial fishing and non-fishing related interests. Any WDFW budget should provide enough state funding for these services, require other sectors to adequately cover their costs, or stop providing the services.

• **Fairness:** As WDFW’s largest source of revenue, recreational fisheries should be prioritized in relevant fishery management decisions. While recent progress has been made to improve the management of some state fisheries (Columbia River, Willapa Bay, etc.) -- these reforms must be fully implemented. WDFW’s budget request should also include proposals that are consistent with the economic and license revenue benefits of recreational fisheries.

• **Increased Opportunity:** It is critical that any increased license fee revenues benefit anglers, protect and improve hatchery production, and provide meaningful additional angling opportunity.

• **Size of Increase:** A typical salmon and steelhead angler will see their fees increase significantly. The goal should be to grow recreational fishing opportunity and the number of licenses sold. WDFW must be sensitive about the proportional increase of license fees.

Key Issues

Between now and the legislative session, it will be of critical importance that key fishery management proposals and decisions recognize the respective revenue contributions of individual fisheries. Ultimately, it is up to WDFW to sell any proposed fee increases to the public. There are a number of high-profile challenges that remain, including:

• **Columbia River Fishery Reforms:** The bi-state agreement to prioritize recreational fisheries and remove non-tribal gillnets from the Columbia River mainstem is set to take effect next year. It is critical that WDFW stay true to these reforms and their conservation, economic, and license revenue benefits.

• **Puget Sound Co-Management:** Puget Sound sport fisheries have seen significant reductions in recent years. This year’s “North of Falcon” impasse further highlighted the need to restore Puget Sound sportfishing opportunity, provide for greater equity in state-tribal co-management, and ensure license fee dollars benefit recreational fisheries.

• **Eastern Washington Fisheries:** Anglers in Eastern Washington are seeking fairness and consistency in the management of salmon and steelhead fisheries in the upper Columbia and Snake River, as well as the implementation of lower river gillnet reforms.

• **Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor:** Recent Commission policies to improve the management and conservation of fisheries in Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor deserve continued support in season-setting and hatchery production decisions.

• **Hatchery Lawsuits:** Roughly 100 salmon and steelhead hatchery programs across Washington face serious legal threats due to the lack of federal approval of Hatchery Genetic Management Plans submitted by WDFW and tribal co-managers. Urgent action is needed.

CCA Washington stands ready to work with WDFW, the Commission, Governor Inslee, and the Legislature in the months ahead to ensure funding challenges are met and conservation is prioritized.
Newest Chapter Joins the Fight for Common-Sense Conservation

The CCA Hells Canyon Chapter was officially formed last Spring, with their first banquet sponsored by Renaissance Marine Group (makers of Duckworth, Northwest Boats, and Weldcraft) in Clarkston. With over 100 members at the banquet, it was an incredible success in terms of building membership and developing a strong leadership team. Now officers have already been elected as they look forward to growing the chapter in the years ahead.

Thanks to our great crew of anglers, conservationists, and local business owners who have combined to form a strong chapter that will make a difference for the fish of the Lewis & Clark Valley.

CCA Washington Derby Schedule Grows

Derbies are a great way for CCA to grow membership, increase exposure, and show folks a great time. CCA Washington hosted their very first such event in the Puget Sound region this Summer. Held in late July, the Baker Lake Sockeye Shootout was put on by a great crew of volunteers from the North Sound chapter led by derby chairman Tony Bakke. Slower catches didn’t dampen enthusiasm with nearly 75 anglers signing up for the inaugural event and some great sponsorships coming in from local businesses.

The Baker Lake Sockeye Shootout was preceded by two established events, the 5th Annual CCA Wenatchee Salmon Derby hosted by the North Central Washington chapter and the 4th Annual CCA Summer Steelhead Challenge hosted by the Lower Columbia Chapter. Both events saw an uptick in participation over 2015, with thousands of dollars in prizes awarded at both derbies. Most importantly, these derbies brought anglers from around the region to enjoy one of the things that we’re all passionate about… fishing!

Our final derby event of the year is a special one in that we don’t keep our catch. Instead, we’re angling for the future of Hanford Reach Fall Chinook and quality hatchery programs at the CCA King of the Reach Derby, hosted by the CCA Tri Cities chapter.

Bringing together CCA, WDFW, and Grant County PUD, this event has grown each year and is the largest live capture tournament in the Inland Northwest. Anglers are given aerated livewell tanks for their boats and are instructed to catch and retain wild fish in these coolers on closed waters of the Hanford Reach. These fish are then tallied and collected by WDFW to be used in improving the genetic base and diversity of hatchery produced Fall Chinook. Thousands of dollars in prizes were awarded to anglers in this unique and incredibly fun derby that saw a 50% increase in participants this year.

CCA Washington Statewide Sponsor Family Grows

The importance of conservation and recreational angling has never been more apparent as many companies have signed on to support CCA Washington as statewide sponsors. These donors provide goods for each banquet by working with CCA staff and volunteers to coordinate their gifts for conservation. We ask our members to support these businesses for all that they do for the fish.

If you own a business that would like to support CCA across the state in 2017, please contact our office toll free at 877-255-8772.

Thank you to these companies for their statewide support during the 2016 calendar year: AFTCO, Batson Enterprises, Brad’s Killer Fishing Gear, Bubba Blade, Clearwater River Company, Costa, Cousin’s Tackle, EDGE/North Fork Composites, Engel Coolers, Folbe, Mack’s Lure, Montucky Cold Snacks, Pautzke Bait Co., Pro-Cure Bait Scents, and Worksharp Knife and Tool Sharpeners.
The following information comes from data provided by WDFW, through a public disclosure request, regarding commercial landing data on the Columbia River from 2013-16.

- Only 47 gillnetters reported fish over all four years.
- Average yearly gross sales (ex-vessel value) were less than $20K over all four years, ranging from a low of $17,513 in 2015 to a high of $22,314 in 2016. Remember, these gross sales do not account for cost of equipment, maintenance, gas, contract labor, etc.
- On average, approximately half of the gillnetters reported gross sales that were less than $10K. Without other sources of income, or additional subsidies from our government, one could conclude this is little more than a hobby.
- Over all four years, the average ex-vessel price of a Columbia River salmon was only $2.19/pound.
Member Photo Spotlight

*Check out these great catches by CCA Washington members and supporting guides. Submit your photos to info@ccawashington.org to share in the next edition of the Ripple Effect.*

Guide Mike Ainsworth of First Light Guide Service poses with a beautiful wild winter steelhead from Western Washington.

CCA Pierce County member Art Tachell with two dime bright Puget Sound Chinook salmon.

Bo Lybeck of Bo’s Sport Fishing Adventures shows off a gorgeous Klickitat River summer steelhead.

Sport Fishing at a Crossroads

*continued from page 1...

the next few months as ODFW and WDFW review the historic, bi-state plan to end non-selective commercial gillnetting and prioritize recreational salmon fisheries in the Columbia River basin. Despite frustrations with fish management policies in Southwest Washington, our salmon and recreational fisheries have benefited during the plan’s 3-year transition period. The plan is set to be fully implemented in 2017 with the removal of gillnets from the mainstem and a significant allocation increase for selective recreational fisheries.

Of course, the commercial gillnet lobby has done everything in its power to block the reforms – lawsuits, legislative maneuvers, and foot dragging on the shift to selective fishing methods. In Oregon, they succeeded in getting a key gillnet strategist, Bruce Buckmaster, appointed to the Fish and Wildlife Commission – the very body that will soon consider changes to the plan. The Washington Commission and WDFW will need to take the lead in faithfully implementing the plan. If not, you can bet there will be tens of thousands of upset recreational anglers up and down the Columbia River who will give WDFW and legislators an earful – the last thing the agency needs right now.

This next legislative session is critically important to determine which road we will take in the future of our fisheries. Given the state of politics in our country, it is easy to give up hope. Instead, I urge you to weigh in with your legislators during the upcoming legislative session, and become an active part of the solution.

Now, more than ever before, it is important for anglers to speak with a common voice, to stand and be counted.

Gary Loomis, Founder - G. Loomis, President - Edge Rods, Chairman Emeritus – CCA Washington
CCA Washington Adds New Assistant Director

CCA Washington has a new member of its team in Assistant Director Adam Wilson. Adam is a New Hampshire native with a degree in Environmental Science focusing in Aquatics. He has spent most of his professional life working for the betterment of our fisheries, specifically in Alaska, Washington and Oregon. Having spent eight months as an Assistant Director for CCA Oregon, he looks forward to continuing to work with great volunteers in the Pacific Northwest by supporting fundraising events and growing our membership. When Adam is not working you can find him exploring the wilderness and all it has to offer whether it be on a bike, in a boat, or on foot. 🎣
Coastal Conservation Association Membership Application

Complete this form and send to:
Coastal Conservation Association
11805 NE 99th Street Suite 1350
Vancouver, WA 98682
Ph. 877-255-8772
Ph. 360-694-4300
www.ccawashington.org

MEMBER INFORMATION
- Renewal Dues
- New Membership

Name __________________________________________________________________________
Associate Member Name(s) (if applicable) _____________________________________________
Member ID# (if renewing) __________________________________________________________
Address ________________________________________________________________________
City State _________________________________Zip _______________
Phone ____________________Email ________________________________________________
Gift Membership From: ____________________________________________________________

$10 NEW TIDE: Rising Tide newsletter, free NEWM TIDE logo decals, Iron-on T-shirt
Quarterly payment option available.

$100 LIFE MEMBER: Life member display piece, plus member gifts.
$500 PATRON: Silver leafed pin, plus member gifts.
$200 SPONSOR: Bronze leafed pin, plus member gifts.
$15 ASSOCIATE: Per each family member. All member privileges except TIDE. Send names.
$100 MEMBER: All of the above plus CCA print of your choice

METHOD OF PAYMENT
- Cash Enclosed
- Check or Money Order Enclosed
- Mastercard □ Amex □
- Visa □ Discover □
- Credit Card # ______________________
- Exp. Date _________________________
- Signature _________________________

Member ID# (if renewing)

Associate Member Name(s) (if applicable)

$30 NEW TIDE: Rising Tide newsletter, three NEW TIDE logo decals, iron-on T-shirt transfer, redfish & speckled trout sticker. For members 17 and younger.

$30 MEMBER: Membership card, window decal, 2 bumper stickers, TIDE magazine.

$500 PATRON: Silver leafed pin, plus member gifts.

$100 LIFE MEMBER: Life member display piece, plus member gifts.

$15 ASSOCIATE: Per each family member. All member privileges except TIDE. Send names.

$100 MEMBER: All of the above plus CCA print of your choice.

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