

Washington's Wild Future

A Partnership for Fish and Wildlife

Vancouver Regional Forum (Region 5)

August 8, 2016

The following public comments were offered by participants at an open forum on fish and wildlife issues sponsored by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) at the Vancouver Regional Forum. Approximately 52 participants attended the event, one of six regional forums conducted around the state.

HUNTING

- Feds should pay for sea lion removal and cormorants. They should pay for the loss to fisheries/mitigation.
- Archery season overlaps with fire closures.
- Partnerships for hunting blind maintenance, ADA compliance (WA Waterfowl Assn.).
- Avoid fees for private land access (Weyco).
- Continued loss of hunting opportunity, county owned lands not open for hunting.
- Elk - what to do to increase populations.
- Tax situation for private landowners hunting fees.
- Have effective volunteer outreach.
- Increased cooperation between state government and federal government.
- Supports Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT).
- Proposes increased cooperation between Audubon and WDFW (Fundraise at birding sites).
- Increase state funds for Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT), partner with Non-governmental organizations who are already organized on this subject (WA Audubon, Sierra Club, WA Conservation Lawyers, Marbled Murrelet Conservation)
- Tax similar to Pittman-Robertson (PR) or Dingell-Johnson Act (DJ) on non-consumptive gear (backpacks, binoculars).
- Cost of youth pheasant release hunting too high.

FISHING

- Swift doesn't open until first week in June, when it used to open in April.
- All open unless closed (pamphlet).
- Implement Columbia River Policy as intended.
- Manage Group B steelhead conservatively.
- Elochoman protection.
- Kalama Falls/River hatchery anticipated 30,000 return and need 35,000 for hatchery program. Then release anything with adipose fin. Food bank gets the remainder. What about recreation fisher? Where is his/her share? Why not sell the fish? You need money? Sell the fish!
- Improve spring chinook fishery on Lewis River through hatchery production. Increased opportunities will result in increased revenue.

- Sea lions are a problem.
- Buoy 10 mark select fishery too complicated - allow possession incidental catch hatchery fish.
- CRSSE (Columbia River Salmon and Steelhead Endorsement) Program was to be temporary.
- Eliminate wild/native fish designation and continue with increased hatchery production.
- Allow possession of first two fish especially in ocean.
- Return funds from surplus hatchery return to agency.
- Do tribes contribute financially to fishing management, product? We could use casino dollars.
- Don't like Columbia River politics. Feel that fish show up and just as that happens the recreational anglers are pulled and gillnets go in year after year.
- Hatchery Scientific Review Group - Hatchery reform.
- Statewide Steelhead Management Plan 2009.

FISHING LICENSE FEE PROPOSAL

- 1st Catch record card should be free.
- 1 day license too costly.
- Fish Washington package.
- Catch record card cost too high.
- Collect email addresses with hunting/fishing license applications.
- License sales: analysis. What percentage is coming from out of state, and average age of the customer base?
- Matching increases with economic growth.
- Partner with sporting goods stores to offer discounts on fishing licenses for people buying beginner fishing gear and packages.
- Catch Cards – 2 tier system; 1st card reduces cost – limit +/- 5 fish. 2nd card higher cost-higher limit of fish on card. Benefits those who fish seriously vs. those who fish occasionally (catch occasionally)
- Guide fees too low (compare to other states Colorado as example).
- License fee increase is Ok, but doubling the fee is too much.
- Reduced price for first-time license buyers.
- Impacts to families, cumulative impacts on families that participate in everything.
- Raising fees on an ever-decreasing pool.
- Really like efforts to simplify rules, mobile app., emails and social media (doing great).

COMMERCIAL FISHING

- Why sport/commercial license cost unbalanced. Sport is double the commercial cost.

CONSERVATION

- Wants support for habitat and old growth forest.
- Bird Watching Stamp - similar to migratory waterfowl stamp.
- WA waterfowl Assn. opposes Shillapoo Salmon Restoration project:
 - Negative impact to wetlands, waterfowl and hunting opportunities.
 - Removes water from area.
 - Drainage of wetlands.
 - How will this be mitigated for?

- Let's make restoration permitting easier. Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups funding (low cost, local restoration).
- Need to limit work window for recreational hydraulic mineral prospecting on East Fork Lewis River to August 1-14.
- Voluntary conservation stamp.
- License fee dollars dedicated to enforcement.
- Need more enforcement.
- Percentage of Discover Pass that goes to DFW.
- Important Bird Areas – signs that have Q-codes to make a donation and link to birding training information and link to e-bird.
- Supports our marbled murrelet work.
- Concerns about salmon restoration activity causing loss of year-round wetlands and loss of hunting opportunity and wildlife viewing.
- Outreach opportunities for K-12 education on WDFW lands: Want opportunities for kids to be involved with agency restoration.