

NFS Comments On WDFW Hatchery Policy Draft version #4

Policy C-3619 **DRAFT4** 07/16/2009

FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION

PROPOSED POLICY DECISION

D R A F T 4 07/06/ 07/16/2009

POLICY TITLE: Hatchery and Fishery Reform POLICY NUMBER: C-3619

Effective Date: _____ 2009

Supersedes: N/A Termination Date: December 31, 2012

See Also: Approved by: _____

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to advance the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead by promoting and guiding the implementation of hatchery reform. **Meaningless statement because it makes no specific commitment about objectives. Conservation and recovery of wild salmonids in each watershed with specific scientific based targets for nutrient enrichment from spawner carcasses, optimize genetic and life history diversity and avoid cumulative ecological impacts of hatchery fish on wild fish in freshwater and saltwater environments.**

Definition and Intent

Hatchery reform is the scientific and systematic redesign of hatchery programs to **help contribute to recovery** of wild salmon and support sustainable fisheries.

The intent of hatchery reform is to improve hatchery effectiveness, ensure compatibility between hatchery production and salmon recovery plans and rebuilding programs, and support sustainable fisheries. **This introduces conflicts and provides no process for resolving those conflicts. For example, what is the priority of this policy to recover wild salmonids or support sustainable fisheries. That is unstated and unclear. It also provides not direction as to how conflicts between recovery actions and supporting fisheries will be resolved.**

General Policy Statement

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) shall promote the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead and provide fishery-related benefits by **implementing a establishing enforcable objectives clear goals** for each hatchery, **conducting scientifically-defensible operations, and using scientifically informed decision-making to improve management.** Artificial production programs **with will be designated as one of the following characteristics:**

- Conservation Programs. Artificial production programs implemented with a conservation objective shall have a net **aggregate** benefit for the diversity, spatial

structure, productivity, and abundance of the target **and non-target** wild populations.

- Harvest Programs. Artificial production programs implemented to enhance harvest opportunities shall provide fishery benefits while **ensuring allowing** watershed specific **objectives goals** for the diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance of wild populations **to be met are achieved.**

Commercial and recreational fisheries **shall be structured to will need to increasingly focus on for** the harvest of **abundant** hatchery fish. As a general policy, the Department shall implement mark selective salmon and steelhead fisheries. **unless the Wild** populations **substantially** affected by the fishery **may be harvested providing they are achieving the stated conservation requirements for each affected population and the impact of the fishery on those requirements are evaluated.** **are meeting spawner and broodstock management objectives.**

In addition, the Department may consider other management approaches provided they are as or more effective than a mark selective fishery in achieving spawner, **conservation objectives** and broodstock management objectives. **Alternative management approaches shall be adopted by the WDFW Commission following a public hearing.**

Policy Guidelines

The Department shall:

- 1) Work with the tribes in implementing hatchery reform and selective fisheries including acting in a manner that is consistent with U.S. v. Washington and U.S. v. Oregon and other applicable state **laws and agreements** or federal laws **and agreements.**
- 2) Use the principles, standards, and recommendations of the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) to guide the management of hatcheries operated by the Department. **(The principles, standards and recommendations of the HSRG must be stated so the management direction is clear.)**
- 3) The Department **shall will** prioritize **and implement** improved broodstock management **(including selective removal of hatchery fish) to control specific impacts of hatchery fish on wild fish for each hatchery program to maintain the reproductive fitness and viability of wild populations.** **reduce the impacts of hatchery fish and improve the fitness and viability of natural production, (A date certain for this work should not be left out of the rule) working toward a goal of achieving the HSRG broodstock standards for 100% of the hatchery programs by 2015.**

4) Develop an action plan that systematically implements hatchery reform as part of a comprehensive, integrated (All-H) plan for meeting conservation and harvest goals at the watershed and Evolutionarily Significant Unit (ESU)/Distinct Population Segment (DPS) levels. Action Plans will include development of stock (watershed) specific population designations and application of **HSRG broodstock management standards to maintain the reproductive potential of affected wild populations. appropriate PNI and pHOS levels to their management.** In addition, plans will include a timeline for implementation, strategies for funding; estimated costs including updates to cost figures each biennium. **The department shall provide a cost benefit analysis of each hatchery program including the cost to produce a fish that is harvested to the legislature and the public.**

5) Externally mark all artificial salmon and steelhead production that is intended to be used for harvest except as modified by state-tribal agreements or for conservation or research needs. **These exceptions shall be specifically stated according to watershed and species affected. A risk assessment shall be provided to the Commission and the public for all exceptions. The risk assessment shall include, but not limited to, impact on conservation management of wild salmonids, monitoring and evaluation of wild populations, and effective operation of hatcheries to achieve objectives.**

6) **Secure necessary funding to ensure** that Department-operated hatchery facilities **comply with environmental regulations** are “wild fish friendly” with for passage facilities, water intake screening, and pollutant control systems. **that comply with environmental regulations. All department-operated hatcheries shall be in compliance with the federal Clean Water Act for toxins, temperature and disease.**

7) Implement hatchery reform actions on a schedule that meets or exceeds the benchmarks identified in the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Framework. **(what does this mean? – a date should be inserted here to provide specific direction to the department and the Commission.)**

8) Provide an annual report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission **and the public** on progress of **policy** implementation **identifying successes and an explanation of problems of policy application.**

9) Develop, promote and implement alternative fishing gear to maximize catch of hatchery-origin fish **while controlling harvest impact mortality from all fisheries to ensure that biological objectives for each wild, native salmon and steelhead population are achieved in each watershed. with minimal mortality to native salmon and steelhead.**

10) Seek funding from all potential sources to implement hatchery reform and selective fisheries.

11) Define “full implementation” of mark selective fisheries and develop an implementation schedule.

12) Work with tribal co-managers to establish a network of wWild Salmonid Management Zones (WSMZ)¹ stock gene banks. Establish a network of wild stock gene banks across the state where wild stocks are largely protected from the effects of same species hatchery programs. Establish The Department will have a goal of establishing at least one WSMZ wild stock gene bank for each species in each major population group (bio-geographical region, strata) in each ESU/DPS. Each stock selected for inclusion in the WSMZ must be sufficiently abundant and productive to be self-sustaining. in the future. Fisheries can be conducted in WSMZ if wild stock management objectives are met as well as any necessary federal ESA determinations are received. Single population strata, ESU or DPS may be excluded from this requirement based on the need for conservation hatchery programs. A candidate for wild stock gene bank must meet criteria below:

a) Each stock selected for inclusion in the gene bank must be sufficiently abundant and productive to be self-sustaining in the future.

b) No release of same species hatchery fish will occur in streams where spawning of the stock occurs, or in streams used exclusively by that stock for rearing.

c) Fisheries can be conducted in wild stock gene banks if wild stock management objectives are met as well as any necessary federal ESA determinations are received.

¹ Wild Salmonid Management Zone is equal in meaning and application to the term of “Wild Stock Gene Bank” as used and defined in the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan.

KEY TO NFS COMMENTS:

GREEN

NFS comments/ changes

Yellow

NFS deletions