

# Columbia River Fishery Reform Informational Briefing

6 December 2019

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife



# Outline for Today

- Harvest Reform Background
- The Oregon Reform Policy
- Washington Actions and Concurrence
- Policy Review Committee (PRC) highlights
- Current and Future Status

# Background

- 2012 – Measure 81
- Governor Kitzhaber asked the OFWC to address “perennial and divisive conflicts” on the Columbia River, including gear conflicts, allocation of harvest and available wild fish impacts, and conservation needs
- Columbia River Reform Workgroup formed

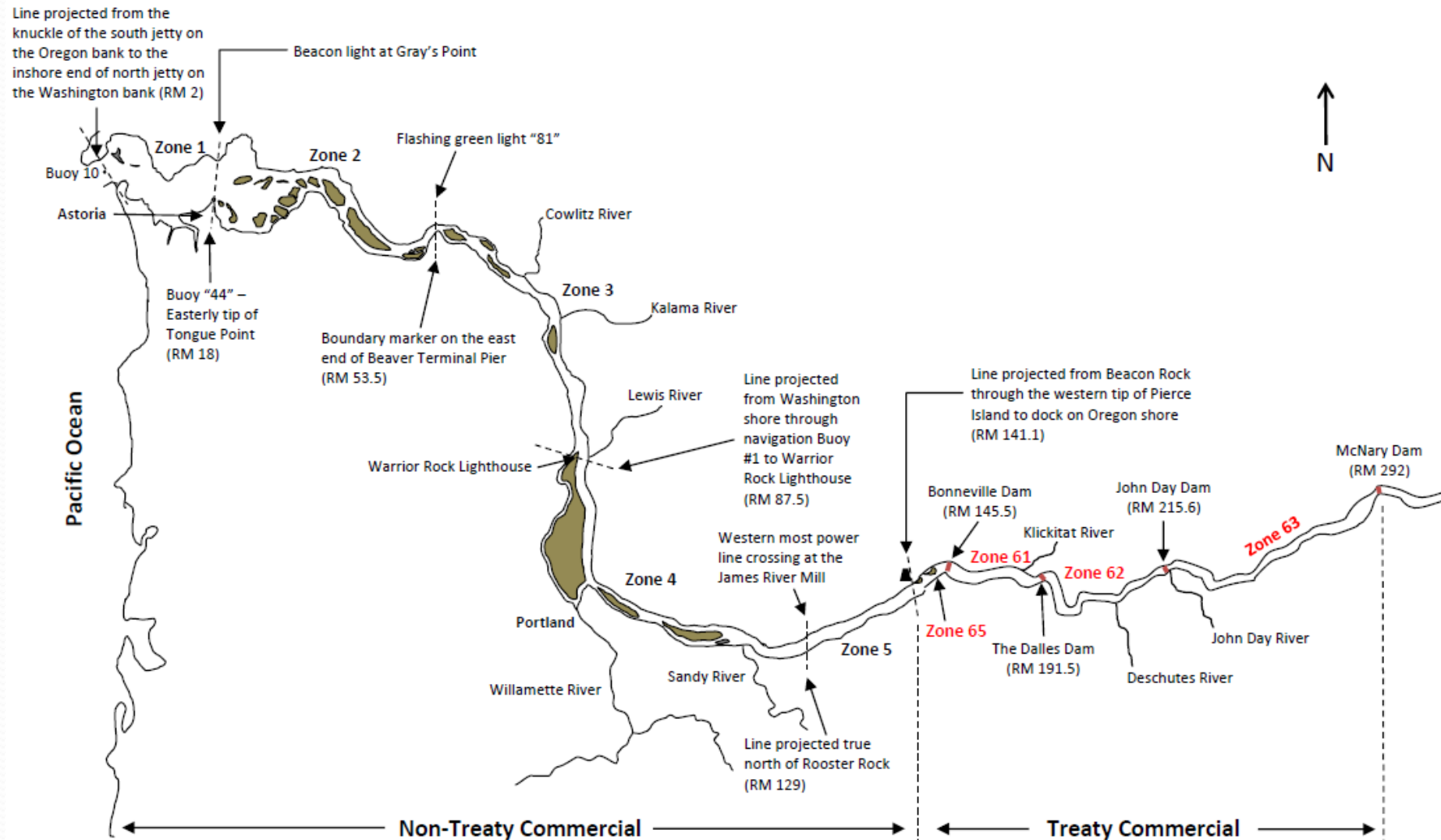
# Background

- Both states adopted similar policies – Oregon by rule
  - OFWC – originally in December of 2012 and again (after a legal challenge) in June of 2013 after reconsideration
  - Oregon Senate Bill 830 is passed in 2013 codifying in statute elements of Columbia River Reform
  - WFWC – Adopts CR Policy C-3620 in January 2013

# Oregon Policy Key Elements

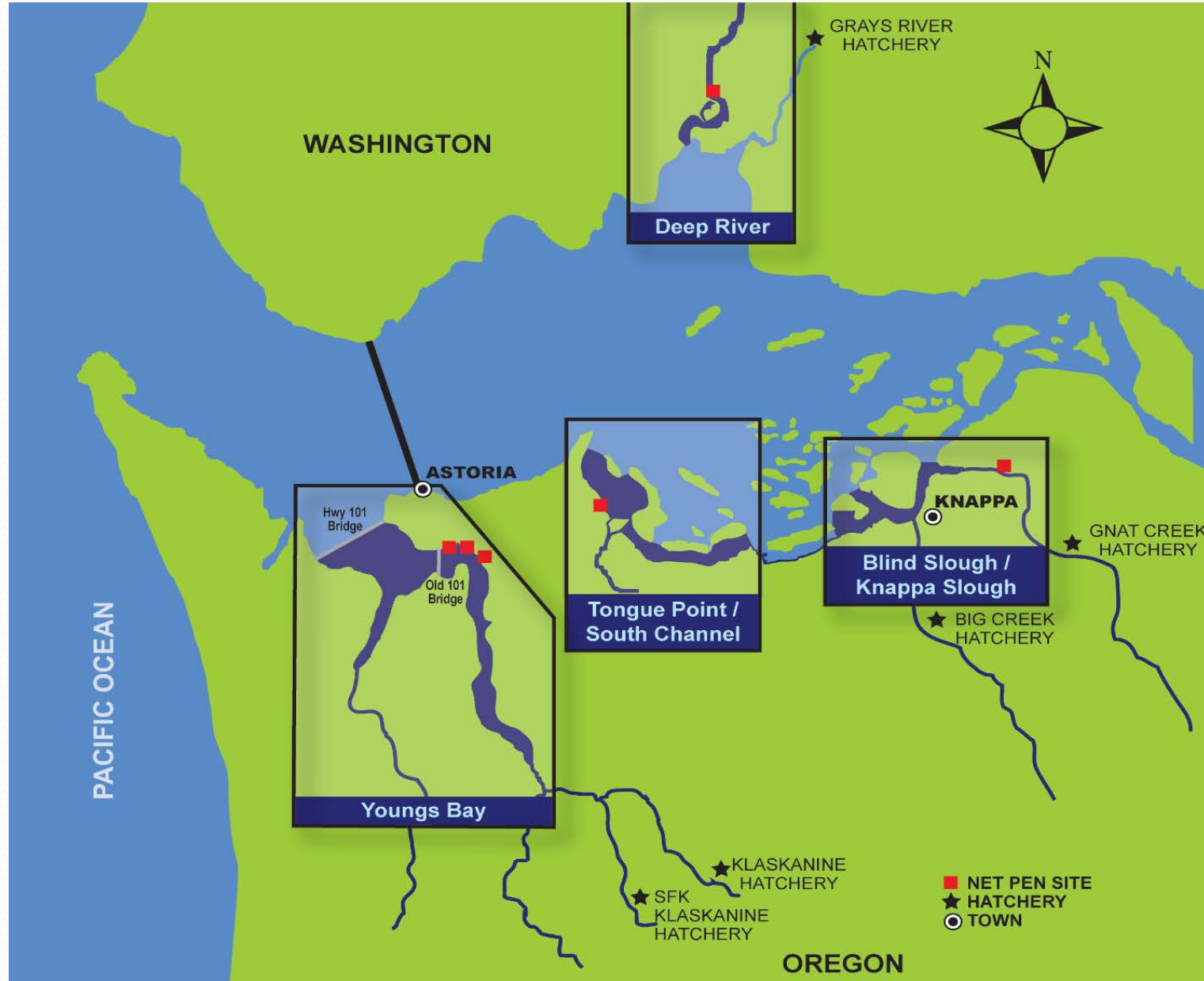
- Shifting allocations to provide a stronger recreational priority in the mainstem Columbia River
- Enhancing off-channel hatchery releases to increase commercial harvest in those areas
- Phasing gillnets out of mainstem commercial fisheries and limiting their use to off-channel areas
- Developing alternative gears and techniques for commercial mainstem fisheries
- Strengthening conservation of native fish
- Adaptive Management

# Map of CR Commercial Fishing Zones



Commercial Fishing Zones on the Columbia River Below McNary Dam

# Map of Current CR SAFE Areas



	2013-2016 Transition	2017+ Long-term
<b>Spring Chinook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2013 allocation shift impacted by legal stay; 70 sport/30 commercial from 2014-2016</li> <li>• Barbless hooks required</li> <li>• Commercial mainstem with tangle nets and gill nets</li> <li>• SAFE Commercial impacts locked at 0.15% impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80/20</li> <li>• Barbless hooks required</li> <li>• Gillnets not allowed in mainstem</li> <li>• Pre-update buffer not applied to commercial</li> </ul>
<b>Summer Chinook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60/40 of harvestable surplus of fish downstream of PRD in 2013; 70/30 thereafter</li> <li>• Barbless hooks required</li> <li>• Commercial mainstem with gillnets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80/20 of harvestable surplus of fish downstream of PRD</li> <li>• Barbless hooks required</li> <li>• Gillnets not allowed in mainstem</li> </ul>
<b>Fall Chinook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <math>\leq 70 / \geq 30</math> of most constraining Chinook stock</li> <li>• Barbless hooks required</li> <li>• Gillnets allowed</li> <li>• Alternative gear development - Pilot seine fisheries occurred</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <math>\leq 80 / \geq 20</math> of most constraining stock</li> <li>• Barbless hooks required</li> <li>• Gillnets not allowed in mainstem</li> </ul>
<b>Coho</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First priority incidental Coho in Chinook target commercial</li> <li>• B10 next priority</li> <li>• Remainder available for commercial with small mesh gillnets or alternative gear, zones 1-3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First priority incidental Coho in Chinook target commercial</li> <li>• B10 next priority</li> <li>• Remainder available for commercial with alternative gears, zones 1-3</li> </ul>
<b>SAFE Production Goals</b>	<p>Spring Chinook: 1.95 M  Coho: 5.09 M  SAB Fall Chinook: 1.95 M</p>	<p>Spring Chinook: 2.2 M  Coho: 5.97 M  SAB Fall Chinook: 2.2 M</p>

# Post Transition Comprehensive Review

- General take homes:
  - Allocation shifts implemented as scheduled
  - Hatchery enhancements in off-channel areas were generally met except where reductions were required due to changes in federal Mitchell Act programs
  - Time expansions for off-channel commercial fisheries have been implemented, though no 'new' sites have been established in either state
  - Non-gillnet alternative mainstem gears (primarily seine gears in the fall) constrained by higher than expected catch and/or total handle mortality of non-targeted fish - particularly steelhead (including ESA-listed wild steelhead)
  - Gains in angler trips, while tangible, were less than expected
  - Robust fish runs helped ensure that commercial economics during the transition period generally exceeded expectations and the pre-reform baseline, although commercial economics could have been even higher under prior policies

	2017+ Original Long-term	2017 Oregon Adaptive Mgmt
Spring Chinook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80/20</li> <li>• Barbless hooks required</li> <li>• Gillnets not allowed in mainstem</li> <li>• Pre-update buffer not applied to commercial</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80/20</li> <li>• Barbless hooks required</li> <li>• Mainstem commercial allowed post-update with tangle net (if remaining impacts available)</li> <li>• Pre-update buffer not applied to commercial</li> </ul>
Summer Chinook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80/20 of harvestable surplus of fish downstream of PRD</li> <li>• Barbless hooks required</li> <li>• Gillnets not allowed in mainstem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80/20 of harvestable surplus of fish downstream of PRD</li> <li>• Barbless hooks required</li> <li>• Gillnets not allowed in mainstem</li> </ul>
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Coho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First priority incidental Coho in Chinook target commercial</li> <li>• B10 next priority</li> <li>• Remainder available for commercial with alternative gears, Zones 1-3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First priority incidental Coho in Chinook target commercial</li> <li>• B10 next priority</li> <li>• Remainder available for commercial with alternative gears, Zones 1-3</li> </ul>
SAFE Production Goals	<p>Spring Chinook: 2.2 M  Coho: 5.97 M  SAB Fall Chinook: 2.2 M</p>	<p>Spring Chinook: 3.7 M  Coho: 5.25 M*  SAB Fall Chinook: 1 M*</p>

# WFWC Post-Transition Action

- Allocations same as OFWC in spring and summer, but WFWC did not allow for any spring mainstem commercial (regardless of gear type)
- Specified  $\leq 75/\geq 25$  fall allocation and allowed use of gillnets in Zones 4-5 for 2017 and 2018 only
- Required WDFW conduct another policy review in 2018
- Absent any change, WFWC policy would go to original long-term plan for fall fisheries in 2019 ( $\leq 80/\geq 20$ , no gillnets in mainstem)

# Concurrent Management

- Long history of substantively concurrent fisheries in joint state waters of OR and WA
- Important part of CR Fisheries Reform statutes and rules, and CR Compact statutes
- Necessary for orderly and enforceable fisheries
- Facilitates reciprocity in joint state waters
- Minor differences through 2018 manageable (e.g., <5% allocation difference)

# Risks of Non-Concurrence

- Orderly fisheries, enforcement, economics
- Gear non-concurrence
  - Split allocation w/WA and fish only on your side of river
- Allocation non-concurrence
  - In past minor differences (<5%) either left on table or split w/WA
  - Large current spring and summer differences (10%) more difficult to deal with
  - The two-states in combination cannot exceed ESA and US v OR constraints
  - Larger the non-concurrent difference, larger the economic impact if not resolved

# Status Check - 2019

- As of January 2019, fishery policies in the two states were not concurrent – non-concurrent gears in fall most significant difference
  - WFWC – no gillnets,  $\leq 80/\geq 20$
  - OFWC – gillnets allowed Zones 4-5,  $\leq 70/\geq 30$
  - Spring and Summer largely concurrent
- Joint OR/WA commission meeting Nov 2018
  - Agreement to form “Policy Review Committee” to seek concurrent policies
- PRC is three commissioner’s from each FWC
- PRC to review and discuss reform and other CR fisheries policies, seek to reach a recommendation(s) to achieve concurrency
- Not decision making – full Commission’s need to act on any changes

# Policy Review Committee (aka PRC)

- Seven meetings have occurred: Jan 17, Feb 6, Feb 26, Mar 14, Aug 1, 29, and Oct 1
- Feb 26 meeting resulted in majority recommendation for near-term
  - Put allocations and gear policies back to 2016 levels (last year of transition period), and include increased off-channel production specified in Oregon 2017 adaptive management; allow barbed hooks
- WFWC adopted PRC recommendation in March
  - Compared to current Oregon policy: no change for 2019 spring and moot for 2019 summer – no summer non-treaty seasons due to poor run size
  - Matches current Oregon allocation and gear for fall Chinook

# Where are we now?

- November PRC meeting postponed given recent turnover in OFWC
- Date selection for PRC meetings is in progress
- Several non-concurrent issues exist, e.g., allocations, commercial gears, barbless hooks
- WFWC to be briefed on current status of PRC next week

# Conclusions

- Columbia River fishery management is complex and ongoing,
- Oregon and Washington have been working on the current management regime since 2013 and have been striving to reach concurrency since 2017
- Some of the original ideas, e.g, enhanced off-channel area fisheries, are working and will continue to get better as additional production comes on-line
- Some of the original ideas, e.g., alternative gears, have not worked out as expected, necessitating changes
- Adaptive management was taken by OFWC in 2017 and will continue to be an important component moving forward



**QUESTIONS?**