

Appendix 1 Attachment VI

Oregon Coastal Coho Project Comments from Public Meetings

The following questions and comments were offered by individual members of the public at meetings held in Coquille, Florence, Newport and Tillamook during November, 2006. This bulleted list of questions and comments was assembled by the facilitation team of DS Consulting and is based on notes taken during the meetings. It is not meant to provide a verbatim transcript of the discussion; rather, it is intended to highlight the issues and questions raised about the Oregon Coast Coho Conservation Plan.

<u>Coquille Meeting – November 13, 2006</u>

Public Questions:

- Who harvested the fish in 1997?
- What about predators?
- Why are hatchery fish being reduced?
- Why didn't stakeholders represent more of the landowners where there are coho?
- Why have landing fees?
- What is the recovery plan for Southern Oregon Coho?
- What year(s) do the numbers from Rock Creek Hatchery and the baseline reflect?
- What percent of hatchery marked?
- Who determines what is a 'good' or 'bad' return?
- Why do restoration if fisherman can't fish?
- How migratory are SONCC/LC coho?
- Where are jacks counted?
- How were the stakeholder team members chosen? Was STEP represented? Were commercial fishermen represented?

Public Comments:

- (Anonymous): Notification for the meetings was poor.
- Leo Grand Montague, Coquille STEP:
 - ODFW should have hired a district biologist to do research on coastal streams. Two species return to South Fork Coquille: Fall Chinook and Steelhead. Coho were raised for the South Fork in 1934. Coho must be separated out – and would dispute if fish were re-introduced.
- Helen Franklin, Coos Soil and Water District:
 - It is offensive to put a salmon on a license plate.
 - The use of the term "ESU" is inappropriate – it needs a new definition, as it doesn't meet the criteria of its federal definition.

- Hatchery salmon should be counted – for predator consumption. (And, if ODFW doesn't follow laws, why should the public?)
- 10 year salmon plan – need to see results. Upland management isn't justified with research (no documentation); measures are discussed as rule, not voluntary – need to define what is regulatory. (The plan is supposed to be voluntary, but it seems regulatory. Who will monitor? DLC, ODA, ODF?)
- The plan has no notification of elected officials of Coos County, and ODFW has shown disrespect to locals – we will not encourage landowners to work with ODFW. However, we will work with ODFW to remove regulations.
- Sharon Waterman, Landowner:
 - Landowners have done much to help save the salmon – and coho is a viable species!
 - This plan is equal to a federal plan. Re regulations – results of data show there is an occasional need for regulations such as legislation. Also, will future regulations allow for monitoring?
- Willie Shorb:
 - Plan is another bureaucratic layer – have already done enough, and time and money could be better spent.
- Rick Goche, Fisherman:
 - Disappointed – we heard about this meeting at the last minute.
 - Why not produce more hatchery fish?
 - Lake systems are not productive – they used to provide 50% of ESU.
 - Commercial fishermen have made all the sacrifices – now need more hatchery production.
- Paul Merz, Commercial Fisheries / STEP:
 - Thanks to the stakeholder team, I have been aware of the plan for a long time.
 - Coquille Watershed Association had created more fish and improved habitat.
 - Lack of commercial fishermen gives access of fish to the public – and most people depend on commercial fish catch. Harvest needs to be in the plan – and harvest must have hatchery protection; we can make real fish with aggregate broodstock.
- Jeff Kruse, Senator/Farmer:
 - The Governor and the Attorney General need to challenge the federal government for jurisdiction over the coastal streams – this is a states' rights issue.
 - Policies have prevented stream complexity, but years ago there was removal of riparian wood.
 - The Bill appropriating hatcheries with broodstock is okay with the federal government and it should be okay for the state of Oregon – this bill will be submitted again.
 - We should move away from clipping fish – it is a flawed policy that leads to a high mortality rate.
 - We need decent hatchery programs.
 - Fecal coli doesn't come just from cows – it comes from deer and elk as well.
 - There is a huge political aspect to the plan: landowners vs. protectionists.

- The Coastal Caucus active in the last legislative session should have been briefed before going public with the plan.
- Put pressure on the Administration to step up on predators and hatcheries – we need government on our side.
- Arbie Gillespie, Sport Fisherman:
 - Fear that we are going to be regulated. We need to get the federal government out of this process.

<u>Florence Meeting – November 14, 2006</u>

Public Questions:

- By water quality, do you mean water temperature only?
- How many ‘failing’ areas currently have or have had restoration efforts? Why haven’t they worked?
- Re: the assessment document – you talk about an adaptive program - do you plan on moving toward limiting factors?
- The slide show said no new regulations – what reason? Was it a political move or do you truly believe voluntary efforts will get us there?

Public Comments:

- Tom Peterson, FSG/STAC:
 - All plans are subject to change, and nothing is fixed – but this plan is a good start. The key is participation by all parties, both public and private.
 - The TRT should have a history and expertise in coho restoration for each ESU, and TRT members selected through the local watershed council.
 - Keep in mind that enhancement of coho also helps the Chinook, cutthroat, and steelhead populations. Commercial harvest rates in the future could possibly be determined by the numbers of out-migrating coho smolt and the class year returning coho adults. (Forget jack numbers – not a good indicator of anything!) Suggest heavily monitoring a selected coastal stream to show an historical picture.
 - Education and outreach – this is best achieved by STEP working with local schools. This would do three things: introduce students to multiple life and physical sciences, get parents and communities involved with fisheries, and impose academic standards, by motivating the marginal student to improve their grades so that they can participate in these programs.
 - Again, the key is recruitment – want to see that emphasized in the plan.
- Dean Hendricks, Vice-President of STEP:
 - I invite all who are interested to become a member of STEP!
 - STEP has been working with USFS. Personally, I’ve worked on placing logs, and I invite the public to come and see the restoration work being done. Note: the success story of Silk Coos Lake – you can still catch a wild coho! As VP of STEP, I get to see the results of the efforts.
 - Suggestion: get the plan out to a broader audience. (Could announce at sport shows, or other places where there is a large audience, and get a lot of feedback.)

- Paul Burns, USFS:
 - Re: research needs – restoration effectiveness brings variability. You should always report the variables on monitoring results
 - The lakes systems are really unique. More research is needed. Lakes, and wetlands above them, all influence restoration.
 - Overall, the plan reflects some great work. There is a tendency to be short-sighted; most restoration projects look only 20-30 years ahead. Plans will need to address what the long-term factors are.
 - Not addressed in the plan: industry removing wood for intermittent drainages.
- Nancy Nichols, Siuslaw Watershed Council:
 - Should have included tax incentives for landowners.
 - Research should study water quality factors in addition to temperature (e.g. pesticides).
 - Measure 37 brings a lot of potential for degradation of essential habitat.
- Paul Engelmeyer, NFS:
 - Need to address recovery of ecosystem processes (not only forest, but agriculture as well).
 - SB 1010 should be reviewed by others outside the state.
 - High Intrinsic Potential habitat is THE priority for coho.
 - FEMA should change its funding processes.
 - OWEB should earmark funds according to landowners.
 - Oregon’s monitoring strategy is good, especially compared to California. However, concern about monitoring strategies dropping off. Suggest: look into SRS, and then the standard.
- Ralph Saulsgiver, Siuslaw Fisherman:
 - There should be more in the plan about predators. They are a major reason why there are no smolts – and seals have increased tenfold in the last few years. (Even though it is politically risky to say seals are a problem.)

Newport Meeting – November 16, 2006

Public Questions:

- Why does the ESU stop at the Sixes? Why isn’t it broader?
- Monitoring/research needs are mostly in fresh water – why?
- How do you define abundance?
- Regarding smolt/adult survival – any areas over 15%?
- How are education / awareness addressed in the plan, to get the ‘desired social consensus’?
- On the maps, see areas of “failed” viability – are those areas where hatcheries had an influence?

Public Comments:

- Ron Phelps, Fisherman:

- There has to be balance and predictability – need to know how to handle stocks.
- Paul Engelmeyer, NFS:
 - On the graphs, language does not fully tell the story (e.g. comparison data, where will we be in next 10-20 years; what we will do to respond to benchmark findings.) ODFW will need to add more detail.
- Virginia Tardowether, Toledo:
 - The graphs need to be clear and simple if they are going to be used for the general public – make the materials clear and readable.
- Joe Steer, Landowner/MCWC:
 - Support the idea of asking landowners to voluntarily contribute. It is the best way, and much has been done already – with the resources in landowners' pockets.

<u>Tillamook Meeting – November 30, 2006</u>
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Public Questions:

- Presentation slide on levels of desired status: Was desired status modeled for any particular year? Timeframe for desired status?
- Any indication from NOAA on planning for ocean conditions?
 - ODFW response: As a 'new' science, NOAA is dedicating significant funding and time to study near shore effects and north-turning stocks; 'dead zones' causes; and new information that could be useful, e.g. life cycles of bugs in the ocean to show what the ocean might do a few years in advance.
- Graph on desired status goals: 50,000 to 100,000 during a poor ocean. What evidence do you have that if you put more fish out, you'll get more back?
 - We believe providing more over-winter habitat will create higher quality fish and habitat, not just numbers, during poor ocean conditions. **Public Comment:** The difference between the quality of a smolt that comes out of high quality habitat vs. that out of low quality habitat – this does not make sense.
- Did you factor in predators, e.g. mergansers, impacting these fish?
 - Predators are a natural cause of death; we are looking at how protecting predators/marine mammals is imbalanced with fish needs. 'Over-protecting' these predators is something to look at, but not the natural interchange between coho and their natural predators. This was identified as a major research need, to understand and demonstrate the predator role in the strain on coho. The state is currently pursuing more flexible management at the state level for pinnipeds in the Columbia River.
- **Public Comment:** The Plan is missing how the lack of food adversely impacts fish. Is diversity of habitat discussed? 'Stream complexity' is meant to cover this, needs to be clearer in Plan.

- The ODFW strategy is to enhance nutrients via carcass placement. **Public Comment:** Carcasses not being placed in small streams is the primary issue.
- Question about the hatchery program in the Salmon River.
 - ODFW's management strategy is to re-program them to the lower Columbia (raised in the Salmon and released into Young's Bay); and monitor via the Hatchery Research Center. The chinook hatchery program on the Salmon River is NOT slated to change. **Public Comment:** Concern about 'fin-clipped only' ocean catch. The fishers' perception is that everything is going away but nothing is coming back.
- Specific to Tillamook County: The assessment shows numbers were least improved here. In terms of volunteer efforts – which landowners in this area are you targeting?
 - Mid- to small tributaries are best for overwintering habitat; still need to find additional potential high quality areas for overwintering habitat.

Public Comments:

- Commissioner Mark Labhart: Thanks for being flexible with the town hall schedule. Two and a half years of the stakeholders' time spent on this process is appreciated. After review and discussion, the Board of Commissioners support the Plan, subject to:
 - Implementation should continue to be voluntary. Concern: 72 times the plan says 'regulate or regulatory'. Want to make sure this is a voluntary effort. Landowners have done a lot. Continued cooperation between landowners and regulatory agencies is essential to success.
 - Implementation should remain free of politics.
 - The Plan should identify particular projects that aid implementation.
 - Stream barbs are one example. Once identified, create streamlined process for permitting. Show by example how it can and does work.
- Paul Hanneman, speaking on behalf of himself:
 - Appreciate stakeholder team for their efforts.
 - Salmon River production facility reduction and overall reduction of produced coho proposed to 260k causes concern: so much lower than what we used to produce in the 1960's and 70's. Plan removes option for fall back if conditions call for a need for this reserve.
 - Coastal residents: Watershed councils, Soil and Water Conservation Districts and all other volunteers are 'delivery systems'. The stakeholder group could have been stronger if better represented by these additional volunteer groups
 - Voluntary vs. regulatory. Concern that the program will become more regulatory and will not maintain the true volunteer aspect that is projected in the Plan today.
- Jack Harrell: Habitat work sounds and looks great, but the limiting factor up and down the coast is predators. My 25 years' experience in California shows the water snakes, birds, etc. eat fry. Part is natural, yes, but predator populations have

taken off, e.g. cormorants, while salmon numbers have dropped. Looking to create quality habitat should include consideration of ways to keep the predators out too. Predation on all salmonids.

- Ben Stout: What happened to the other 37 streams classified as poor? Dividing our coast coho into units – what does that do to help us understand how well the fish are doing overall? In general, biologists are blinded by their ‘need to classify’. Understanding impacts of ocean conditions, predation, and defining quality habitat are all important: Without these considerations, the plan is deficient.
- Gus Meyer, representing himself. Compliments to those that have done this work so far: on the ground, non-regulatory work by community based groups. I agree with that. Further in the plan, new/significant modifications of agencies: concern with cost. High quality habitat improvements – Tillamook basin allocated funds are not enough – not 100% for even one project on the ground here. The word ‘continues’ repeated over and over, ‘maintain’, ‘support current activities’. Funding rearrangement is needed to support high quality habitat restoration. The Plan does not include demonstrations of stream complexities. Show an example of stream complexity that is sought to help conservation groups and their planning. Also include examples for wetlands, rearing habitat. Finally, Implementation Team needs a Tillamook upland resources owner and a Tillamook wetlands owner to help with this collaborative effort. The US Army Corps of Engineers is not mentioned in the Plan – they need to be involved in order to truly get on the ground work done.
- Tod Jones: I appreciate the work of this group. The Plan mentions STEP programs but only in terms of habitat work. Over 2 million hours of time are given and less than 10% of that is for habitat restoration – the plan implies that STEP volunteer work is only wanted for habitat restoration. STEP offers propagation and education pieces that are crucial. STEP should be recognized in the plan for these two main activities they do. Hope the plan will allow for flexibility to address additional issues, e.g. spawning gravel improvement. Plan does not defend that 7.5% of loss in gravel beds is not bad, nor what opportunities exist for enhancing early survival. Over winter habitat may be one, but there must be some out there already.
- Bub Boquist: Concern with the concept of placing wood debris in upper rivers. Back in the day, there was no debris, and certainly not glue and cable. Tide sloughs existent at present are useless. So look at tide gates. Rivers are so full of gravel that fish are scattered all over the fields. Finally, there should be more law enforcement against take.
- Denise Loughlin, Tillamook Bay Watershed Council. Watershed councils are key partners in implementing on the ground efforts. Request that the Governor and staff consider fully funding the OAC and SWCD funding proposals. Non-capital operating support is essential. We have struggled with inadequate funding, yet completed more on the ground work than California, Washington, Alaska and Idaho combined.
- Wayne Giesy: The Coast Coho Stakeholder team was very diverse. This Plan is a starting point, not a finished product. We should support it.