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FROM: Chinook Technical Committee, Pacific Salmon Commission

DATE: February 14, 2014

SUBJECT: Biologically Based Escapement Goal for Grays Harbor fall Chinook, Washington

At its bilateral meeting February 11th, the Chinook Technical Committee (CTC) was presented a new maximum sustained yield escapement goal for naturally spawning adults for Grays Harbor fall Chinook, and reviewed nearly final documentation of it supplied by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the Quinault Indian Nation (QIN). The CTC accepted escapement goal of 13,500 adults will be used to evaluate management actions for consistency with the Pacific Salmon Treaty objectives of rebuilding and sustaining healthy Chinook salmon stocks.

The escapement goal is based on spawner-recruit relationships using estimates of production resulting from naturally spawning fish in the Chehalis and Humptulips river basins from brood years 1986 through 2005. The CTC considers the data and methods documenting the escapement goal of 13,500 to be sound and biologically-based. Further details will be summarized in TCCHINOOK (14)-02, Appendix D.

The CTC recommends some minor modifications to the final report, but does not expect these to affect the escapement goal more than 5% and does not anticipate that further review by the CTC is required as a result of incorporating the following suggestions:

1. Tabulate adult spawners and recruits (excluding jacks) by brood year for each river basin (Chehalis and Humptulips) and for the total Grays Harbor production, to facilitate independent analyses and reproducibility.
2. Further clarify the rationale for using the Queets exploitation rate indicator stock.
3. Cite the Little Hoquiam River mark-recapture study supporting the use of 2.5 fish/redd.
4. Explain the analyses exploring marine survival indices or other environmental covariates and why none were used, i.e., that there was no correlation with residuals.
5. Include, where available, estimates of stray rates and percentage hatchery origin by basin, and associated coefficients of variation.
6. Document the proportion of reaches not surveyed.

The CTC appreciates the work done to provide this improved metric and the effort to address 1) the list of desired elements for documentation, as listed in TCCHINOOK (99)-3, and 2) whether the analysis met the recommended data standards for biologically-based escapement goals, as listed in CTC Technical Note 1301 in TCCHINOOK(13)-1.