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## NORTH OF CAPE FALCON

The initial 2003 North of Falcon (NCF) meeting was held at the Department of Natural Resources building in Olympia on March 19<sup>th</sup>. The initial NCF meeting was well attended by the WDFW and the Western Washington Treaty tribes. This was the twentieth annual meeting of the NCF process that has two meetings sandwiched between the March and April Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC) meetings. The primary purpose of the NCF meetings are to review the range of salmon options adopted during the PFMC March meetings, to begin to incorporate proposed terminal area fisheries, and to develop a package of ocean and terminal area fisheries for consideration at the April PFMC meeting. The Washington Dept. of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) was the host for this meeting.

The NCF process is comprised of the states, tribes, federal fishery management entities and also the recreational and commercial fishing interest groups. The meetings are open public forums, except for the Tribal/State government-to-government negotiations.

The first topic discussed was the proposed Chinook Selective Fishery Plan for Areas 5/6. The proposed draft was reviewed and minor language changes were agreed upon and tentative approval was reached to consider this fishery with the other fishery proposals for 2003.

The group discussed Appendix C for chinook. The language in the 1999 PSC chinook agreement was the consensus of the assumptions to include in the next chinook model run. The direction was for the technical team to prepare three chinook model runs that parallel the three ocean options. The two Puget Sound chinook stocks identified as being the most critical were the Nooksack and Dungeness.

The group developed an initial package of inside fisheries and directed the technical team to model it with both ocean options I and II for coho and chinook. The group reviewed the modeling results by evaluating the impacts of several stocks of concern. The chinook stocks of concern included the Dungeness, Nooksack, and Snake rivers and the Lower Columbia River wild. The coho stocks of concern include the Oregon Coastal Natural (OCN), Hood Canal, and the Thompson River in Canada.

The range of options adopted by PFMC for the ocean fisheries establish the "sideboards" for quotas to be considered following public review. The options are from the most "liberal" to the most "conservative" for the ocean fisheries for the 2003 season. The most conservative option must meet the conservation constraints for the "weakest" stocks of coho and chinook.

The second NCF meeting was held at the SeaTac Holiday Inn on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>. The second NCF session focused on the resolution of some of the shaping of fisheries to meet Puget Sound chinook stock exploitation rate objectives for 2003, i.e. Dungeness, Nooksack, and Puyallup rivers, and the development of inside and terminal area fishery agreements to meet other conservation and allocation objectives.

Following the second NCF meeting, the options for the 2003 ocean fisheries were narrowed to Option I for the non-Indian recreational and commercial fisheries for both chinook and coho. The Treaty ocean troll fisheries options for 2003 are Option I for both chinook and coho.

We have spent considerable time in the NCF process defining specific fishing strategies to address conservation concerns for some Puget Sound and Coastal coho and Chinook stocks. We can report considerable success in development of fishing plans for 2003. We are continuing to meet to work out some final details and are optimistic a comprehensive set of fisheries both in the ocean and inside areas will be completed this week that fully meet our management objectives.