

Mar-10-05 04:41P

Agenda Item C.6.d
Supplemental Public Comment
March 2005

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Executive Director
Glen H. Spain
Northwest Regional Director
Mitch Farro
Fishery Enhancement Director
Vivian Bolin
Watershed Conservation Director
Duncan MacLellan
Salmon Advisor

Please Respond to:
California Office
P.O. Box 29370
San Francisco, CA 94129-0370
Tel: (415) 561-5080
Fax: (415) 561-5464

<http://www.pcffa.org>

Northwest Office
P.O. Box 11170
Eugene, OR 97440-3370
Tel: (541) 689-2000
Fax: (541) 689-2500

BY FAX and Mail

10 March 2005

Mr. Donald K. Hansen, Chairman
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97220-2280
ATTN: Dr. Donald McIsaac, Executive Director

RE: Proposed Actions to Address Problems Associated With Record Low Klamath Chinook
Abundance Numbers Resulting from 2002 Fish Kills

Dear Chairman Hansen and Council Members:

Thank you providing us an opportunity to testify during your meeting on Tuesday to suggest some actions the Pacific Council could call for, in addition to the season options it would be developing for the 2005 ocean salmon fishery - made especially difficult as a result of the low Klamath chinook abundance numbers resulting from the 2002 fish kills that occurred on that river. The following are the three action items, with some explanation, that we would ask the Council actively support. This season and likely the next will be extremely difficult. They will be difficult for all of you having to recommend to Commerce some of the most severe closures ever imposed on the fishing industry. It's going to be hard for the three tribes as well as the recreational fishermen, guides and businesses on the Klamath and it's going to be difficult for salmon fishermen all along the coast to survive. This tragedy could have been averted were it not for the actions of another agency three years ago, and the irony, of course, is the fall-out from the 2002 fish kills comes at a time when there is predicted record abundance of other stocks, such as Sacramento River fall chinook.

The following is what we recommended Tuesday for your support. We will continue to look for other actions that can help the fleet avert contact with Klamath stocks, help with the survival of Klamath stocks - both the juveniles going to sea this spring and the spawners that will be returning in late summer, and the financial needs of the fishing communities affected by this. We ask the Pacific Council to support:

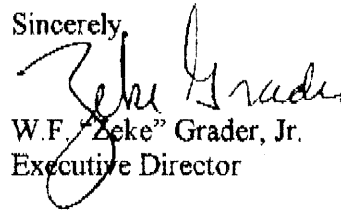
Mr. Donald K. Hansen
10 March 2005
Page Two

1. **Trucking.** Immediately initiate a trap and truck program utilizing U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service existing screw traps to take juvenile salmon coming out of the Klamath mainstem, Bogus Creek and the Shasta and truck them to below the confluence with the Scott for release back into the river. The trucking would allow the fish to bypass the "hotspot" in the river where disease is rampant and upwards of 80 percent of the small fish are being infected and dying. The California Department of Fish & Game has the trucks. The problem is mainly paying for personnel to go out and do the trapping (one suggestion was to contract with Karuk tribal members to conduct some of this work). A possible funding source could be some of the monies the Bush Administration wants to provide growers in the Basin. This is an urgent action and would need to be undertaken and completed by the end of April.
2. **Tagging.** The second action would be, as part of any trapping program of wild juveniles (some hatchery fish could be utilized as well) would be to tag some of the fish to follow their migration pattern. I have not yet heard back whether radio tagging of juveniles is practical, but I certainly think it should be utilized if physically feasible. Tracking Klamath fish in the ocean may hold the potential for being able to conduct fishing operations while avoiding contact, if the fish tend to stay together as a group and do not widely scatter. In any event, the information learned from this will be useful for management. The program could be expanded in a second year to also include tagging of coastal chinook stocks (e.g., Eel, Mattole), since concern has been raised this year about the impact of the 2004 fishery, to also track those populations, if possible, to find methods to better avoid the take of these listed fish.
3. **Experimental Fishery.** The third action would be to immediately initiate an experimental fishery program in the KMZ and "Fort Bragg cell." The purpose of the experiment would be to sample fish on a daily basis within these two areas where fishing might not otherwise be permitted (and therefore no information would be forthcoming). The vessels would be paid to do the work and would be directed to various areas within each cell on a daily basis (weather permitting) to determine the presence of salmon and their stock composition. This is not a quota fishery and the boats would only go where directed - most likely in pairs - not where the most "fish were biting." Vessels utilized in such an effort, could be those that for whatever reason (e.g., family) cannot travel to the open areas and may not otherwise be fishing (the "home guard") because of the closures. This would probably have to be a day boat fishery with the fish decoded each night (there is nothing magic about heading a marked fish, freezing its head and then reading it the following January). While the fishing could target on marked fish (releasing all non-marked fish) for the sampling, a sample of fish could be taken from each area, regardless of marks, by taking tissue from each fish for DNA testing. The University of California Bodega Marine Laboratory, which is fairly close to the areas that would be sampled, pioneered much of the work on salmon DNA testing. Protocols would have to be established to assure the amount of fish taken would be within acceptable levels. This action, utilizing up to a dozen boats in each cell with nightly analysis will not be cheap, but it will provide important information and could pave the way for timely in-season management. It, too, should be paid for from a portion of the funds the Bush Administration proposes for the Klamath Basin.

Mr. Donald K. Hansen
10 March 2005
Page Three

I also want to express my appreciation for the Council's willingness to help us move forward seeking disaster relief for the affected communities. It's difficult not to be bitter over the loss to California of a \$100 million dollar plus fishery in 2005 and one of almost equal value in Oregon, but we need to keep focused on the work at hand. We look forward to working with the Council and its staff these next few months to find ways to protect fish and fishermen alike.

Sincerely,



W.F. "Zeke" Grader, Jr.
Executive Director

WFG:rd

Cc: The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor of California
The Honorable Ted Kulongowski, Governor of Oregon
The Honorable Barbara Boxer
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Gordon Smith
The Honorable Ron Wyden
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Mike Thompson
The Honorable Peter DeFazio
The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
The Honorable Lynn Woolsey
The Honorable George Miller
The Honorable Anna Eshoo
The Honorable Sam Farr
The Honorable Lois Capps
The Honorable Richard Pombo
Dr. William Hogarth, NOAA Assistant Administrator for Fisheries