

SALMON MANAGEMENT OPTION HEARING SUMMARY

Date: March 28, 2006	Hearing Officer: Mr. Roger Thomas
Location: Flamingo Hotel Santa Rosa, California	Other Council Members:
Attendance: About 500	NMFS: Mr. Mark Helvey
Testifying: 41	Coast Guard:
	Salmon Technical Team: Mr. Allen Grover
	Council Staff: Mr. Chuck Tracy
<u>Organizations Represented:</u> Fort Bragg Salmon Trollers Marketing Association; Coastside Fishing Club; Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations; Golden Gate Fishermen; North Coast Fisherman's Association; Fishermans Wharf Fisherman's Association	

Synopsis of Testimony

Of the approximately 500 people testifying:

- 21 commented primarily on the commercial troll fishery.
- 12 commented on both the recreational and commercial fisheries.
- 10 commented on economic or other aspects of the fisheries.
- 10 commented on issues associated with Klamath River water management issues.

Special Opening Remarks

Mr. Thomas gave a brief overview of the meeting process and objectives. Mr. Allen Grover gave a brief overview of the recreational and commercial options.

Commercial Troll Comments

All those testifying supported Option I. One person supported modifications of Option II if it was necessary. One person requested the landing restrictions in Options I and II allow fishermen to land in adjacent closed areas as a safety consideration.

Recreational Comments

All those testifying supported Option I. One person supported modifications of Option II if it was necessary. One person requested that if Option II were considered that an allocation for inriver fisheries be added.

Other Comments

Most people supported implementing emergency regulations to allow fisheries to maintain economic viability of coastal communities. Almost all of those testifying expressed frustration with the water management situation in the Klamath Basin, and requested the Federal agencies to address hydropower and habitat issues. Two people opposed aquaculture expansion into off-shore waters.

Written Statements (Attached)

Representative Mike Thompson (D-CA)
Rick Baker
Greg Hall
Thomas Baty
Spencer Stiff
Ann Maurice
David Pellandini

PFMC
03/31/06

MIKE THOMPSON

1ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE:

WAYS AND MEANS



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

March 28, 2006

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Dr. Donald McIsaac
Executive Director
Pacific Fisheries Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Mr. Roger Thomas
Hearing Officer
Pacific Fisheries Management Council
Flamingo Ballroom
2777 Fourth Street
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

Re: 2006 Salmon Management Option
Public Hearing, March 28, 2006
Santa Rosa, California

Dear Dr. McIsaac, Mr. Thomas & Council Members:

The Pacific Fisheries Management Council (PFMC) needs to preserve a salmon fishing season for California and Oregon this year. At the same time, every effort must be made to maintain the biological integrity of Klamath River stocks. A strong message must be sent to the administration that continued federal mismanagement of the Klamath River is unacceptable.

The failure of the Klamath River to meet the 35,000 natural spawner floor for fall-run chinook sets in motion a disastrously reduced season for commercial ocean, recreational and in-river fisheries. A complete closure is estimated to exact a \$150 million impact on the coastal communities of California and Oregon. The region is still reeling from the impact of last year's season, reduced by 60 percent due to poor Klamath returns, a loss estimated from \$40 to \$60 million. The effect of last year's season combined with a potential closure for this year will be catastrophic and could permanently damage the commercial and recreational salmon fishing industry and related businesses in both states.

As referenced by officials with the Bureau of Reclamation and NOAA Fisheries, the declining salmon populations in the Klamath River basin are not due to over fishing, but are due to a lack of adequate cool, clean water in the river. This fact hurts both upper and mid basin farmers, and mid and lower basin fishing communities and tribes. Current mandated discussions over FERC relicensing have raised the specter of dam removal on the Klamath River. The potential for dam removal holds out the promise of tangible improvement in the system, by opening miles of spawning habitat and vastly improving water quality. Coupled with increased flows, wetland and river restoration, as outlined in the National Academy of Science report, salmon could return in abundance.

Dr. McIsaac and Mr. Thomas & Council Members
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My request to the PFMC is two-fold. First, adopt a decision that preserves a fishing season and protects the declining Klamath fishery by targeting the more robust Sacramento River and Colombia River stocks. Also, recommend to NOAA Fisheries they immediately initiate a basin wide plan to restore and protect the Klamath River basin's salmon stocks.

Second, join efforts to secure a disaster declaration for the 2005 Pacific Salmon Season. To date, the administration has failed to respond to the request for disaster declaration. This delay is unacceptable by any standard and now, on the doorstep of a second-year disaster, sends a loud message that the administration would rather protect a failed water policy than help coastal communities. Please urge NOAA Fisheries to take action, now.

I will emphasize these points tomorrow at a bi-partisan briefing I called with the Department's of Interior and Commerce.

Thank you for your consideration and for the many hours you have already committed to this important decision that affects the lives of so many.

Sincerely,



MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress

Fishermen have been having a difficult time understanding as to why the PFMC , which operates under National Marine Fisheries Service, has been eliminating fishing seasons so they could overload the Klamath River with spawning salmon with numbers far beyond what the remaining river habitat can support. This has caused massive die off of young salmon from starvation.

Chinook salmon have 5,000 eggs, it does not take a lot of salmon to fully utilize what food is available for their offspring. In the Klamath 20,000 spawners will prove to be more than enough to have the highest survival rate when water flows are good. In a low flow situation hatchery fish are the only fish to survive because they are fed and have good water conditions, which is not available to the young wild salmon in the river when flows are extremely low. This can easily be proven by looking at the Klamath spawning charts over the last 20 years.

Our season managers like to blame a parasite for all the dead salmon fry, however well fed hatchery fish do not have the problem, nor does the river when a smaller number of juvenile salmon will find enough food. They also like to use words like natural spawners when they are very likely of hatchery origin.

Hatcheries were built to mitigate to the fishery when the dams were built, not to cover up the damage they caused. Before the dams, the wild salmon runs were the real value of a rivers water. They produced one of the highest value food product and supported thousands of families.

Recently, we are finding out the Bush administration is going to subsidize global salmon farms and close the existing seasons and hatcheries. NMFS and NOAA are supporting these corporate farms . They are at the same time eliminating the existing family business, by keeping wild salmon off the market. These agencies claim that fishermen are overfishing when hundreds of thousands of harvestable salmon are wasted by over loading the Klamath and Sacramento Rivers.

There needs to be an investigation to find out if these corporations have influenced government agencies that are destroying lives of fishing families who have their life savings invested in their boats. Three thousand out of four thousands boats have been eliminated by previous season closures. There appears to be some corruption.

We are hoping our legislators. will request the NMFS restore our traditional salmon season outside the Kl;amath zone (Horse Mt. To Humbug Mt.) or be held accountable for the lives they destroyed and the destruction of the resource. If we cannot hold this government agency accountable we no longer have a democracy.

Alan Maurice
Consumers + Fishermen
for wild fish
PO Box 484
Occidental, CA 95465

North Coast Fishing Association
David L. Pellandini
Fort Bragg, Ca. 95437

Pacific Fisheries Management Counsel
Santa Rosa Meeting
March 28, 2006

Fort Bragg and the entire Mendocino coast as well as most area's of California will be heavily impacted financially and economically if the Salmon fishing season is closed or even reduced from that of the 2005 season.

In Fort Bragg alone several charter boats with 20 plus years of continued service have announced they will have to quit business. Hotels and motels, restaurants, retail stores, sporting goods, marine supply, fuel sales and fuel taxes, virtually every area of economy will be severely impacted.

You are charged with the responsibility to make the correct decision regarding the forthcoming salmon season.

As you contemplate on one hand the salvation of several hundred Klamath salmon, on the other the partial to total economic destruction of many lives and business, I strongly urge you to enact option 1 that has been proposed. That is the exact same season as the 2005 salmon fishing season.

Respectfully submitted,

David L. Pellandini
North Coast Fishing Association

My name is Kurtis Williams; I am 22 years old and have dreamed of owning and operating my own Commercial Salmon Fishing boat since I was a little boy. After graduating from high school when I was 16 I got a job as a deckhand in an industry that creates millions of dollars in revenue and supplies millions of people in our country with salmon. As a result of the severe restrictions to commercial salmon fishing in 2005 and the recent talk of the 2006 salmon season having even more restrictions I have delayed purchasing my own boat in fear that I won't be able to pay for it if salmon fishing is shut down.

How can you ask the commercial fisherman to make further reductions in their catch while ignoring the obvious impediments to salmon reproduction? The big issue is not the effect of commercial fishermen threatening the population of salmon but that of dewatered rivers filled with salmon killing dams.

Blaming fisherman (the real victim) is just an effort to divert attention from the real causes of these declines. The Bush administration says dams are "natural structures" and that dams are "part of the environment baseline" as though they were natural objects like boulders dropped there by glaciers. When in actuality, dams are one of the leading causes to the reduced population of salmon and their reproduction. These unnatural "man-made" structures have eliminated hundreds of miles of very valuable and important spawning grounds throughout Washington, Oregon, and California.

That is why I ask, "Why should the fisherman take the blame and punishment of actions we had nothing to do with?"

In fact, it was a federal judge that made the decision to divert water from the Klamath River for the Bureau of Reclamation during a severe drought in 2002. That decision resulted in two massive die offs of river salmon due to low flow and an increase in water temperature. As a result, a chain reaction of gill rot and reduced oxygen in the water killed thousands of salmon in 2002 and culminated in severe closures being imposed on the Commercial Salmon Industry along the Oregon and California coast. The commercial salmon industry and state has also suffered a multi-million dollar loss of revenues due to these closures.

I would like for you to take into consideration that even though salmon deaths on the Klamath River is a tragedy, there are many other river systems that produce just as many, or more, salmon. The entire central valley river systems, which include the Sacramento, Feather, American, and San Joaquin rivers, produce hundreds of thousands of fish. The American and Feather Rivers produced so many salmon in 2005 that the daily catch limit was increased from two to three fish per day. Additionally, of the over 340,000 salmon caught last year by commercial fishermen only four percent were from the Klamath River.

There are over twenty salmon producing rivers throughout California and several hatchery programs on these rivers that add to the natural salmon reproduction every year. The Sacramento River received 140,000 salmon at the Coleman fish hatchery in 2005 and is able to release 11 million salmon every year. The Monterey Bay Salmon Enhancement Program releases 60,000 salmon twice a year from the

Santa Cruz and Moss Landing Harbors resulting in 240,000 salmon released every year. These fish come from the very strong stock of King Salmon on the Mokelumne River.

The rivers below are some of the rivers that provide more than enough salmon to support the fishing industry throughout California as shown by the salmon returns, hatchery counts, and releases from the hatcheries:

2005 Estimated Salmon Returns and Hatchery Counts

Sacramento River	140,000 + 93,132 returned to hatchery
Battle Creek	165,000
American River	75,349 + 22,349 returned to hatchery
Feather River	69,704 + 23,788 returned to hatchery
Klamath River	68,000 + 13,763 returned to hatchery
Trinity River	10,905 + 20,429 returned to hatchery
Mokelumne River	16,000 returned to hatchery

Yearly King Salmon Releases from Hatcheries

Sacramento River Coleman NFH	11 million
American River Nimbus Hatchery	4 million
Feather River Hatchery	8-10 million
Klamath River Iron Gate Hatchery	6 million + 180,000 yearlings on Fall Creek
Trinity River Hatchery	9 million
Mokelumne River Hatchery	6 million
Monterey Bay Salmon Enhancement Project	240,000

The Sacramento River and its smaller tributaries received an estimated 404,823 salmon in 2005 and the 2006 prediction is at 632,483 with a salmon season.

The Klamath River has a better survival rate on years the minimum of 35,000 spawn mates is not met due to the fact that if there are too many fish the small river can not support all the salmon smolts. The Sacramento River is another good example of an overpopulated river. In 2005 it had over 400,000 salmon return but some were unable to spawn due to over crowding. This year they are predicting a return of 632,000 salmon and if we don't get to harvest them there is a chance of die off due to the fact that the salmon won't be able to find a suitable spawning area or due to lack of oxygen (like when you put too many fish in an aquarium). Salmon need to be harvested so that returns are kept at a level that ensures maximum spawning but not over population that could cause the survival rate to decrease. If there are too many salmon smolts in a river that can't support them with enough food then the survival rate will decrease dramatically.

In 2005 commercial fishermen had severe restrictions imposed on when and where they were allowed to fish. During the month of May it was south of Pigeon Point, in June south of Point Sur, July and August south of Point Arena and September was south of Fort Bragg. The fleet was barely able to catch enough fish to scrape by during June due to the fact that salmon only congregate south of Point Sur one in every ten years.

A decision to close salmon fishing this year between Cape Falcon, Oregon and Point Sur, California would not only be wrong it would be disastrous for the economy of California, as well as Oregon and the rest of the United States. In fact if they are only allowed to fish south of Point Sur this year, there is a good chance the commercial fleet will be forced out of business not to mention that the economy would suffer a loss of revenue in the millions.

I ask that you consider the affect the proposed plan to close salmon fishing will have on the fisherman, fish buyers, markets that sell fish, tackle stores and manufacturers, fuel docks, marine mechanics and many more.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kurtis Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the "s" at the end.

Kurtis Williams

Pacific Fishery Management Council

Please fill out this card if you wish to address the Hearing.

Name: Greg Hall Date: 3/28/06
Organization: Sp. Fishermen
Address: 740 Sugar St
City/State/Zip Code: Hopland Ca
Phone Number: 707 738 1239
Topic: Salmon Can't survive if
Sp. Fishermen aren't prot of
New future support opp 4

Pacific Fishery Management Council

Please fill out this card if you wish to address the Hearing.

Name: Spencer Stiff Date: 3/28/06
Organization: Salmon Restoration Association
Address: P.O. Box 431
City/State/Zip Code: Willow Creek CA 95573
Phone Number: 707 845-8621
Topic: Option # contains ~~2~~ support
for 10 river salmon. I support
option 1.

WRITTEN COMMENT Pacific Fishery Management Council

Please fill out this card if you wish to address the Hearing.

Name: THOMAS BATY Date: 3/27/06
Organization: PUBLIC
Address: BOX 534
City/State/Zip Code: INNERNESS CA 94937
Phone Number: 415 669 1574
Topic: WRITTEN COMMENT
I SUPPORT OPTION 1. WITHOUT
SALMON FISHERMEN SALMON
DO NOT HAVE ANY CHANCE
OF POLITICAL SURVIVAL.

Pacific Fishery Management Council

Please fill out this card if you wish to address the Hearing.

Date: 8/28/05

Name: ROCK BAKER

Organization: RUSSIAN RIVER FLY FISHERS

Address: 127 ALDER BROOK DRIVE

City/State/Zip Code: SANTA ROSA, CA 95405

Phone Number: 707-545-8860

Topic:

PLEASE RECOMMEND OPTION # 1 OR 2

-AS MISSING 14 YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS ARE

ANY REAL SOLUTIONS WHICH ADDRESS OUR



DECLINING FRESHWATER HABITAT FOR JUVENILE +
RETURNING ADULT SALMONIDS

→ PLEASE MAKE STEADY RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR FRESHWATER HABITAT RESTORATION/SUSTAINMENT
ABILITY OR IT WON'T MATTER HOW MANY FISH
ARE IN THE OCEANS.