

SALMON MANAGEMENT OPTION HEARING SUMMARY

Date:	March 26, 2007	Hearing Officer:	Mr. Rod Moore
Location:	Red Lion Hotel Coos Bay, Oregon	Other Council Members:	
Attendance:	43	NMFS:	Ms. Sarah McAvinchey
Testifying:	14	Coast Guard:	LTJG Fitzwater
		Salmon Technical Team:	Mr. Craig Foster
		Council Staff:	Mr. Chuck Tracy
Organizations Represented: Port of Coos Bay Port of Brookings Harbor; Oregon Salmon Commission; Oregon South Coast Fishermen;			

Synopsis of Testimony

Of the 14 people testifying:

- 12 commented primarily on the commercial troll fishery.
- 2 commented primarily on the recreational fishery.
- 2 commented on issues associated with Klamath River water management issues.
- 2 commented on salmon predation issues.

Special Opening Remarks

Mr. Moore gave a brief overview of the meeting process and objectives of the fisheries. Mr. Foster provided a summary of the recreational and commercial options.

Commercial Troll Comments

- Cape Falcon to Humbug Mt.: Most of those testifying supported Option I with two modifications: 1) include the 10,000 non selective coho fishery contained in Option III, and; 2) set a trigger of 15,000 Chinook during the month of August that would require inseason action to close the area between the Bandon South Jetty and Humbug Mt. outside of six nautical miles. One person recommended the closed area be defined as south of a line running west from 43°71.00' N. lat.; 124° 37.00'W. long.; north of a line running west from 42°40.50' N. lat., and west of the line running between those two points. One person supported the season structure in Option II because it provided a full month of fishing in October when prices would be highest.
- KMZ One person testified in support of Option I.
- Other: Three people requested salmon trollers be allowed to retain ling cod.

Recreational Comments

- Two people testified in support of Option I with a 24 inch Chinook minimum size limit statewide.

Other Comments

- One person expressed concern regarding the ability of the Klamath Ocean Harvest Model (KOHM) to accurately predict impacts in 2007.
- Two people encouraged the Council to maintain pressure on water management issues in the Klamath Basin.

Written Statements (Attached)

Responsible Management Option for 2007

PFMC
03/29/07

RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT OPTION FOR 2007

Background:

Last year for the 1st time in nearly a hundred years, the Coos Bay area and much of the State of Oregon did not have any Troll Chinook Salmon Fishery in Federal Waters. This was horrible, caused by problems on the Klamath River that were not the fault of the fishery, and is still causing grave economic hardship and consequences. **We do not want to ever return to that total closure scene again.**

The troll industry stepped up to this situation. We did go into panic mode, yes. We sought and are still seeking disaster funding. However we also were proactive in seeking long term solutions:

- **--We initiated dialog with Klamath Basin Farmers and Tribes about potential solutions to the problems in-river.**
- **--We educated ourselves on the disease problems, and are working as we speak to secure additional long-term funding to better understand the real factors that are causing the boom and bust cycle of the Klamath River Salmon.**
- **--We began DNA sampling with project CROOS, to try to better manage our ocean fisheries and avoid troubled Klamath stocks in our harvest of the future.**

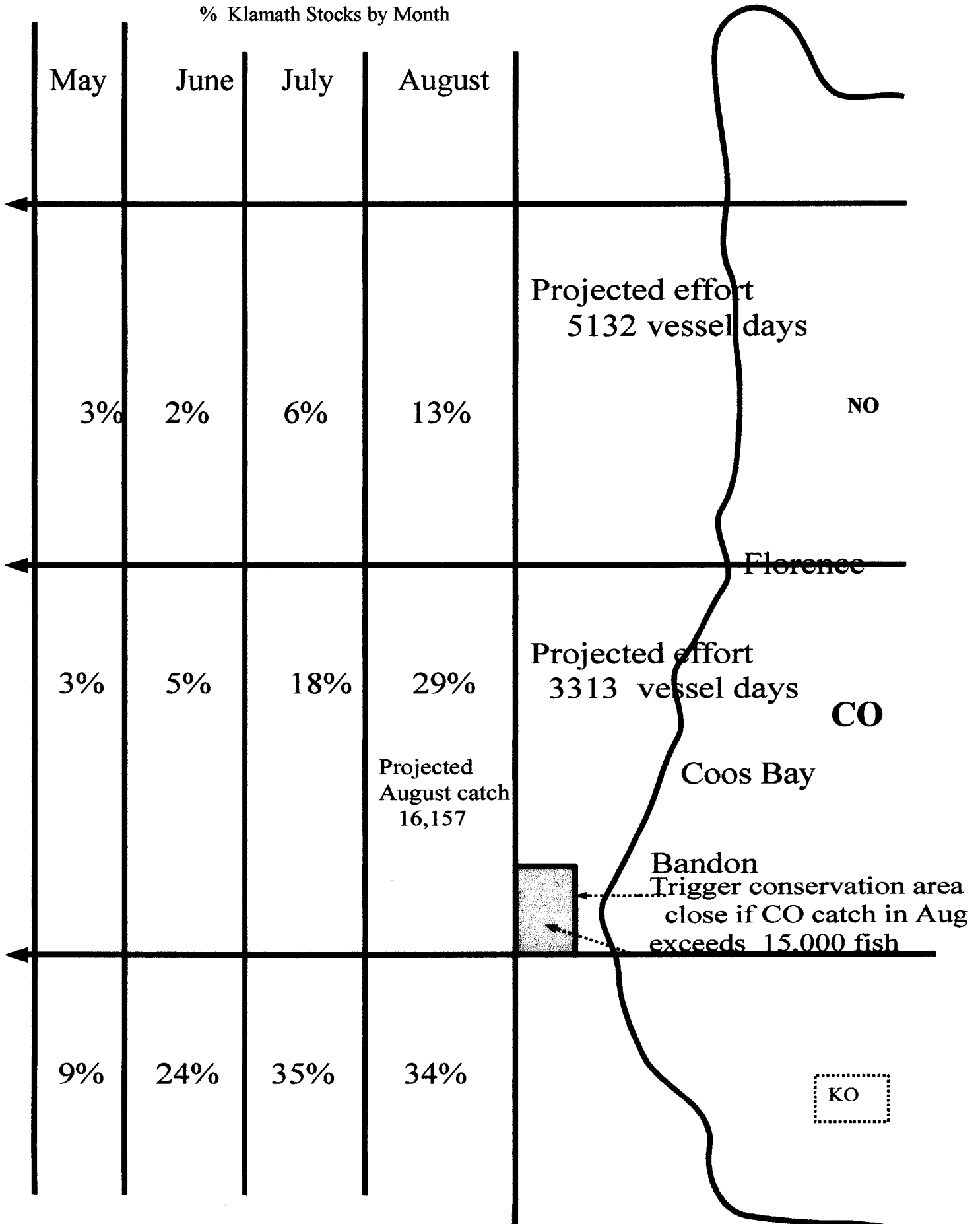
In short, we acted responsibly to try to both protect the stocks and our fishery for the future. Given that the Klamath River did not meet its escapement goal for the third year in a row, the Council will have to initiate an overfishing review of the Klamath River. This is a misnomer. You should call it something else!! There was not too much fishing on Klamath River salmon, the problems were the millions of juvenile salmon killed by disease and parasites. But still, by law, the council must call it overfishing and initiate a review. That will occur this next year. Additionally, we know that the 4 year old component of the Klamath Chinook Salmon run is predicted to be the smallest or one of the smallest on record. We need to be careful!! The worst thing for this industry would be for 2007 fishery to impact Klamath Chinook at a much higher rate than planned. The ocean management plan for this season, 2007, will provide for good spawning escapement if we meet it. We must try our best to meet it, to be responsible stewards as harvestors and part of the larger coastal community.

The Model:

Last year the Council technical staff used a different model to try to estimate ocean impacts on Klamath Stocks. This model had a very short data set, and we objected, both because we felt it was unfairly and inaccurately restricting our fishery last year, and because it just did not make sense to use only a few abnormal years to try to predict the performance of the fishery in the next year. Frankly, there is never a "normal" year on the ocean, every year is unique, which is one of the huge reasons we are implementing the DNA sampling project and developing the ability to actually manage an ocean fishery for what we are finding in any given year.

This year, due to this same short data base, we feel the model could risk overharvesting Klamath 4 year old stocks. Perhaps we are unnecessarily worried, but perhaps we should be cautious, as there are truly errors in the model that are obvious. We need to be careful. We need to have some **trigger point** where if it looks like we might be exceeding our target harvest rate, we can adjust the fishery to better manage the Klamath 4 year old stock. Not close it down, but adjust the fishery. Below is a map showing the Klamath contribution rates for this year, 2007, as predicted by this years model run.

% Klamath Stocks by Month



Responsible Conservation Option

Trigger:

If August harvests in the Coos Bay Cell exceed 15,000 Chinook Salmon, then the Bandon High Spot, (the area below the Bandon South Jetty and outside of 6 miles from Oregon's Shoreline), would be closed to salmon trolling for the remainder of the month of August.

Technical Rational:

- -4 year old Klamath Chinook are projected to be very weak in 2007
- -August is the highest percentage of Klamath Chinook in the harvest of any month (29%)
- -projected effort is likely wrong due to the shortness of the data base. Coos Bay and Newport usually have similar numbers of vessel days
- -based on experience, trollers feel the proposed closure area, if the trigger is met, offers the best option for achieving 2007 management goals.
- -In the future, DNA testing and real time management may offer a better alternative to the current model

This option is offered as a rational response to try to meet Klamath Chinook Salmon Management goals. We realize it could be more restrictive than the proposed options, but feel there is sufficient technical reason to be conservative and adjust the fishery if needed based on a clear performance standard. It would be in addition to any of the other options.

Scott Boley

3/26/07