

SALMON MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES HEARING SUMMARY

Date:	March 28, 2016	Hearing Officer:	Mr. Jeff Feldner
Location:	Red Lion Coos Bay, Coos Bay OR	NMFS:	Ms. Peggy Mundy
Attendance:	25	Coast Guard:	LT Don Rudnickas
Testifying:	10	Salmon Team Member:	Mr. Craig Foster
		Council Staff:	Mr. Mike Burner
Organizations Represented: Oregon South Coast Fishermen, Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP), and the Brooking-Harbor Chamber of Commerce			

Special Opening Remarks

Mr. Jeff Feldner provided opening remarks for the hearing. Mr. Craig Foster reviewed Alternatives for the commercial and sport salmon seasons, and Alternatives for incidental halibut retention in the salmon troll fishery. Richard Heap described all of the work and negotiations that went into the alternative development process and expressed appreciation for his fellow Oregon and California Salmon Advisory Subpanel members for their dedication and for the difficult decisions that need to be made.

Synopsis of Testimony

Of the ten people testifying:

- Five commented primarily on the commercial troll fishery.
- Five commented on both the commercial and the recreational fishery.

Commercial Troll Comments

- Two were in support of Alternative I for the Oregon Klamath Management Zone (KMZ) fishery and stated the importance of providing opportunity for the south coast. One asked the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to consider a state-water bubble fishery near Coos Bay as a way to utilize returning hatchery and Salmon Trout Enhancement Program Chinook returns.
- Two were in support of Alternative I for the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain area stating that several ports are struggling to maintain infrastructure and are in need of fishing opportunity.
- One person was in support of Alternative II for the Cape Falcon to Humbug Mountain area, because the closures in this alternative are more contiguous, making it more feasible to address repairs or to switch gears and participate in other fisheries during salmon closures.

Recreational Comments

- Two people testified in favor of Alternative I for the Oregon KMZ because it is better for the important tourist economy of the region (see written testimony). It was felt that the on/off nature of the closures in Alternatives II and III were confusing and would make it less attractive to fishermen to spend time fishing the region.
- Three people testified for Alternative I for the area between Cape Falcon and Humbug Mountain. One agreed with previous testimony and spoke in favor of a Coos Bay state-water fishery. It was also noted that the larger salmon closures in Alternatives I and II can increase impacts to non-salmon because fishermen are forced to consider other opportunities for non-salmon species.
- One person added a preference for more days of fishing opportunity over additional quota and noted that the fishery has not attained its quota in recent years with the amount of time allotted to the fishery.

Other Comments

- One supported incidental halibut retention Alternative I.
- One supported incidental halibut retention Alternative II because a lower ratio between salmon and Pacific halibut may be warranted in a year like 2016, when salmon catch could decrease relative to recent years.
- Both recreational and commercial interests expressed less concern about September fisheries in 2016 and their potential impacts to fishing opportunities in 2017, in part, due to the reduced summer opportunities in 2016 and decreasing abundance trends.
- Several people discussed the March 2016 State of the California Current Ecosystem Report and the ongoing El Niño and its potential effects on salmon.

Written Statements (Attached)

Letter from Andy Martin, Brookings Fishing Charters and member of the Board of Directors of the Brookings/Harbor Chamber of Commerce in favor of Alternative I for the recreational fishery in the Oregon KMZ.

PFMC
04/05/16



Brookings Fishing Charters -- PO Box 1646, Brookings, OR 97415 -- (541) 813-1082

My name is Andy Martin and I am a charter boat operator in Brookings and a member of the Board of Directors of the Brookings-Harbor Chamber of Commerce. I am involved in promoting tourism in Southern Oregon.

Sport fishing is one of the biggest visitor draws to the Southern Oregon Coast. With a major decline in timber, tourism has become a main component to the economy of Brookings, Gold Beach, Port Orford, Crescent City and Eureka. When ocean sport fishing seasons are open, the tourism industry is bustling. The motels are booked, people bring their RVs, restaurants and gift shops are busy. Tourism dollars change hands several times in the community.

Sport anglers and commercial fishermen face big cuts to their seasons this year because of El Nino conditions and a below-average forecast for the Klamath River. The recreational Option 1 from Humbug Mountain to the California-Oregon border provides an ample sport fishing opportunity while reducing impacts on salmon bound for the Klamath River with a closure for most of August. While the season is open in June and July, weather typically makes the ocean unfishable for several weeks during that time, which will further reduce impacts on Klamath salmon.

For businesses that rely on visiting sport anglers, option 1 is by far the preferred season. A four-day-a-week season, as drafted in option 2, will reduce the number of visiting anglers. People will not want to pay to put their RVs in parks or moor their boats in harbors if they can only fish half the week. People who work Monday through Friday will be impacted by the Saturday closure. A four-day-a-week season will cause some anglers who come to Brookings for weeks at a time with their boats and RVs to instead spend the summer in communities where fishing is open seven days a week. The same is true of restrictions on coho fishing. If the KMZ is closed to selective harvest of coho salmon and the season is open elsewhere, visiting anglers may go there instead.

Option 1 provides a lengthy ocean salmon fishing opportunity this summer and will have the biggest economic benefit for the Southern Oregon Coast. It also will allow anglers an opportunity to fish when weather conditions are best instead of being locked into a Sunday-Wednesday fishery.

Sincerely,
Andy Martin