

# Salmon: New policy necessary to restore depleted runs

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Under the interim policy, gillnetters were given a mortality rate of 14 percent for naturally spawning Chinook, meaning they could only hit a certain number of those fish during the course of regular fishing. Once that percentage was reached, commercial fishing in the area would end. In the past, they had been allowed impacts of up to 40 percent.

Instead, the new policy will allow 20 percent a year through 2018, stepping down to 14 percent thereafter.

Commission member Miranda Wecker had pushed for a 14 percent rate to be implemented beginning this year — a move that led gillnetters and local seafood processors to protest outside of a conference last month in Long Beach where she was scheduled to give a talk about her time on the commission.

Fishermen said that immediate 14 percent would be a “nail in the coffin.”

The 20 percent they’ll now receive through 2018 isn’t much better, though, said Dean Antich, general manager of South Bend Products, a salmon-processing facility in South Bend. The policy provides for very little fishing time in some areas, which



KATIE WILSON — EO Media Group

**A normally staid science conference in north Long Beach, Wash. was the scene of picketing last month to protest proposed cuts in Willapa Bay salmon gillnetting. Pacific County commercial fishermen are angry at the prospect of losing more fishing opportunity in light of recent steps by Washington and Oregon to move them off the Columbia River's mainstem.**

means less product coming across the dock and less need to hire as many people during the summer, he said.

“In the big picture, we’re in the slow wind-down as opposed to the fast wind-down.”

But, he added, it’s still a wind-down.

WDFW and the conser-

vation groups that sued the department in the first place to force it to develop a permanent salmon management policy in Willapa Bay say the new policy is necessary to restore depleted runs of wild, natural-origin Chinook.

Wecker and others with WDFW have said an Endan-

gered Species Act listing is a very real possibility if the department continues to fail to meet its conservation goals. An ESA-listed salmon in the bay could have a huge impact on the shellfish industry, Wecker said in May.

Under the new policy, in addition to limiting commer-

cial fishing, WDFW will also reduce hatchery production of Chinook salmon at the three hatcheries in the Willapa Bay watershed by 36 percent to curtail interference with natural-origin fish on the spawning grounds. By 2018, the bulk of the hatchery fish produced before the policy took effect will have returned.

But local fishermen and processors argue that there are no wild fish in Willapa Bay. Of the thousands of hatchery fish that return to hatcheries there each year, some stray and spawn on their own. These fish never have their fins clipped to mark them as hatchery-origin and are indistinguishable from wild fish in that sense, fishermen say, but that doesn’t make them “wild.”

“They may be derivatives of hatchery products from the past, but there are wild-spawning fish in the bay that contribute to the overall run of the bay,” said Steve Thiesfeld, WDFW’s Region 6 fish program manager who led the development of the new policy and the various options presented to the commission.

NOAA has listed highly domesticated hatchery stocks before, he said.

From his perspective, there is no way to know what

NOAA, the federal agency that typically manages marine ESA species, would decide.

“But we know we’re not in a better place in terms of the health of those stocks,” he said. “In fact, we’re in a worse place.”

“Roll the dice and take your chances? That’s not where we want to be,” Thiesfeld added. “We’d rather be proactive, that’s what I heard the commission say, try to head it off before they even have to ask the question.”

WDFW will also look at introducing new types of commercial fishing gear on the bay. As has been the case on the Columbia River, this could mean looking at other styles of gear such as beach and purse seines that may have been used in the past.

The goal is to find gear that improves survival rates for natural-origin salmon and steelhead, Thiesfeld said.

On the Columbia River, following the passage of Measure 81 by former Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber, fishermen from both Oregon and Washington have tested seines on the river’s mainstem for several years. The resulting mortality numbers, however, have remained high, say fishery managers with WDFW and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

# Food carts: ‘My greatest hope is that this becomes a destination point’

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patch to the north of it. McGrath added that the grassy patch would require a zoning change.

Estrada attended the meeting and handed out samples of her clam chowder to commissioners and the audience. She explained her hope to serve passengers from the Astoria Riverfront Trolley and cruise ships, along with fishers and other visitors to the waterfront.

The boat is self-contained and requires no utilities, Estrada said, and is kept on a trailer so she can take it to other events. She seeks a month-to-month lease to try the concept.

“My greatest hope is that

this becomes a destination point,” Executive Director Jim Knight said, adding one food cart could lead to others.

He said the Port needs to look at issues of parking and the potential impact on adjacent restaurants. Estrada said she will not be serving coffee like Journey’s End Espresso and is a totally different concept than the Bridgewater Bistro.

Commissioner Stephen Fulton said he has seen 25 food carts in a pod in Portland, adding the Port needs to look at a long-term plan for the siting of such mobile food venues.

Permit and Project Manager Robert Evert reported on Ripley’s effort to start a food cart



Daily Astorian file

**Teresa Estrada stands next to a 28-foot-long gillnetter she is converting to a food cart for selling chowder.**

serving aviators, U.S. Coast Guardsmen and employees of Lektro and other companies at

the Astoria Regional Airport.

But Warrenton’s zoning does not allow for any mobile

food carts on industrial land, he said, so the Port is speaking with the city of Warrenton to find a loophole. Fulton said the city is growing and interpreting their ordinances more strictly, adding Life Flight’s temporary headquarters is a nonconforming use only allowed for a year.

Ripley’s position, Evert said, is that his operation is no different from the cafe formerly located in the Port’s airport terminal building. Commissioner John Raichl added there used to be a food cart serving burgers at the airport more than a decade ago.

In other news:

• The Port Commission adopted a 2015-16 budget of

\$16,189,603. It includes approximately \$6.3 million for capital outlays, including a \$5 million, state and federally funded airport overlay project; \$4.4 million for materials and services; \$2.9 million for personnel services; and \$1.5 million for debt service. It also approved of taxing property in Clatsop county at 12.56 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value and confirmed Clatsop Community Bank as the Port’s depository.

• Knight said a member of the Port’s ad hoc Pier 3 boatyard committee will report their findings at the Port Commission’s July 21 meeting. The committee has been discussing changes to the hours, fees, operations and possibly the long-term location of the boatyard.

# Indictments: County could get more than \$300,000 from grant program

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in 2013. The grant program takes savings from prison costs and gives the money back to each county for other uses such as drug treatment, transitional leave and work release.

“The theory is, let’s send the money that would otherwise be used to lock people up, and let’s give (the money) back to the counties so each county can best decide how to spend it,” Marquis said.

The funding for the

grant program is expected to be between \$25 million and \$40 million statewide, depending on what is approved by the Legislature this session.

The money is split up based on how many felons are on probation in each county. Based on the figures, Clatsop County could receive more than \$300,000 over two years.

Marquis suggests the available money go toward the Sheriff’s Office Community Corrections (Probation) Division. The county has not

yet decided who will receive the funding.

Considering all the state data, Marquis wants residents to realize the county is not crawling with criminals and the vast majority of locals and visitors are not breaking any laws.

The data helps with tracking and forecasting trends around the state.

“The one takeaway from this is there is an actual measurable way to look at what is the profile of Clatsop County compared to other similar counties in Oregon,” Marquis said.

# Farmers: Growers are ‘in a state of shock’

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defended the spraying and acknowledged breaking ranks would affect other growers, but stated it was respecting consumer wishes.

“Our priority is to maintain our longstanding relationship with these customers,” according to a company statement.

Two days later, the Willapa-Grays Harbor Oyster Growers Association told DOE it was giving up the permit. “We felt at the time, it was the best decision we could make. Things were just spiraling out of control,” Sheldon said. “We felt like we had to take a hit and step back.”

Since then, the association has hired a public relations firm to help it respond to criticism.

“What really got us was the social media,” said Willapa Bay shellfish grower Ken Wiegardt, a fifth-generation farmer.

Sheldon said growers are “in a state of shock” over the events. He said he had actually hoped growers would be perceived as being responsive to environmental concerns by using imidacloprid.

Imidacloprid was to replace carbaryl, an older insecticide, the use of which has resulted in lawsuits and increasing regulations and that the Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor shellfish industry agreed to phase out more than a decade ago.

Imidacloprid is widely used on land crops. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Washington State Department of Agriculture approved using it specifically in the bay and harbor.

Shellfish growers were to apply 1/16th as much imidacloprid per acre as they did carbaryl, which was used between 1963 and 2013.

Imidacloprid wasn’t going to be as lethal to burrowing shrimp, but growers said they would be more precise about when and where they sprayed.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recommended DOE deny the permit, arguing that field trials in the bay had not yet conclusively determined that imidacloprid would not be detrimental.

Nevertheless, DOE con-

cluded there would be no significant unavoidable adverse impacts, including to bees that pollinate the peninsula’s cranberry bogs, among other plants. As a condition to issuing the permit, DOE demanded monitoring of the pesticide’s effects.

With no current permit to spray for burrowing shrimp, it’s unclear what’s next for shellfish growers.

Washington State University research scientist Kim Patten has spent more than a decade studying how to control burrowing shrimp and hasn’t found a practical alternative to pesticides.

Going back to carbaryl isn’t an option. The EPA no longer registers it as an aquatic pesticide, and DOE has closed off any chance growers could revise their old permit to use it, DOE spokesman Chase Gallagher said.

Growers will miss at least one year of spraying, but they can’t let the matter drop for long, Sheldon said.

“This is not an abandonment of this (spraying) program,” he said. “We’re going to try to do a better job of getting the truth out.”

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