

Light in the tunnel for spring chinook seasons?

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What a mess.

Despite the standoff over Columbia River spring chinook between fish and wildlife commissions in Washington (more sport fishing) and Oregon (more gill-net fishing), there might be a little wiggle room.

Unfortunately, it was very unclear Friday who is gonna blink first.

If you've been reading the blog and the newspaper the past week, you know Oregon wants to give more springers to commercial gill-netters than Washington does.

Oregon won't budge and neither will Washington, which told its staff under no circumstances could it make any decisions on spring chinook until further ordered.

Bewildered staffs in each state have, however, been on the phone. On Thursday, they unveiled some potential season structures they say would likely satisfy both states without having to agree on actual allocation percentages.

They are:

Option 1:

Below Hayden Island Powerlines (to the mouth of the Columbia River):
7 days per week from March 1 - 15,
3 days per week (Thursday through Saturday) from March 18 - April 18.
(March 1 - April 18; 30 fishing days)

Above Hayden Island Powerlines:
7 days per week from March 1 - 15,
4 days per week (Wednesday through Saturday) from March 18 - April 22.
(March 1 - April 22; 36 fishing days)

Option 2:

Below Hayden Island Powerlines:
7 days per week from March 1 - April 3.
(34 fishing days)

Above Hayden Island Powerlines:
7 days per week from March 1 - 23,
6 days per week (Monday through Saturday) from March 25 - April 18.
(March 1 - April 18; 45 fishing days)

Option 3:

Below Hayden Island Powerlines:
7 days per week from March 1 - 22
(22 fishing days)

Above Hayden Island Powerlines:
2 days per week (Friday and Saturday) from March 20 - May 2.

(14 fishing days)

Combined fishing days for both areas is 34 days.

Of the three options, sources who watch such things believe option 2 has the most traction.

A lot more traction, unfortunately, than the prospect of anything happening.

Oregon is dug in pretty hard...so hard, in fact, the commission may not even take the issue up again.

Washington is waiting for the Oregon commission to self-destruct, but all it has to do is tell its staff to go ahead with the season-setting.

Willamette River seasons also are on hold pending a decision because some of its run has to be spent on allowing valuable sport seasons from Hayden Island to Astoria.

Meanwhile, thousands of potential anglers and guides are heading off to next week's Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show not knowing whether they'll get a chance to be sportsmen (and women) or will become just another parent, grandparent, etc., sitting around the living room dreaming about last year.

License and fee increase? For what? More of this?

C'mon Oregon...swallow something big enough to get us back on the water and interested in dogwood blooms.

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