

Meeting Date: May 17, 2017

Agenda Item No. 5b

Agenda Item: Season Setting, Chinook Salmon Fishery

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Lance Hebdon, Anadromous Fish Manager

Background:

This agenda item concerns fisheries targeting hatchery-origin Summer Chinook Salmon on the Clearwater and returns to the South Fork Salmon River and the upper Salmon River. Typically these fish return later than the spring Chinook Salmon returning to the Clearwater, Snake and Little Salmon rivers.

The 2016 summer Chinook Salmon fishery on the Clearwater River was the first fishery for Summer Chinook in the Clearwater River since the early 1900's.

Summer Chinook salmon fisheries have been conducted on the South Fork Salmon River in 1997 and in 2000 through 2016. Fishing locations and times for the 2017 South Fork Salmon River fishery are anticipated to be similar to those in recent years.

The 2017 Chinook Salmon fishery proposal for the upper Salmon River will be targeting hatchery returns to Sawtooth Hatchery while trying to minimize impacts on adults returning to Pahsimeroi Hatchery, which is not currently forecasted to have a harvestable surplus of fish.

Specific boundaries will be described in a separate season proposal. For all fishing areas, staff will present forecasts of the return of hatchery salmon that would allow sport fisheries to target the non-tribal harvest share estimated after brood stock requirements are considered.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Idaho Statute 36-104(b)2 gives the Commission the authority to set fishing seasons. Rules governing fish are provided in IDAPA 13.01.11

Public Involvement Process:

Public meetings to obtain input on Chinook Salmon fisheries or informational briefings were conducted by regional staffs in February and March.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the proposed 2017 Summer Chinook Salmon fishing seasons for Clearwater River, South Fork Salmon River and Upper Salmon River.

NOTE: At the time of preparation of this gold sheet, fisheries staffs were in the process of updating salmon return forecasts and scoping fishery options. The specific fishery proposals are not included here but will be delivered to the Commission at the May Commission meeting when more information on the status of the return is available.

Justification:

Salmon and steelhead mitigation hatcheries were built to mitigate or compensate for fishing opportunity lost as a result of hydropower development. The proposed seasons would provide anglers the opportunity to fish for salmon returning to the hatcheries.