

Meeting Date: May 6, 2021

Agenda Item No. 5. B.

Agenda Item: Season Setting, Summer Season Chinook
Salmon Fisheries

Bureau Chief Approval: ES

Prepared by: Jim Fredericks, Chief, Bureau of Fisheries

Background:

This agenda item concerns Chinook Salmon fishing seasons targeting adult anadromous Chinook Salmon returning to the South Fork Salmon, upper Salmon, and Lochsa rivers. Staff will provide a run update for hatchery returns. Current forecasted returns are not sufficient to propose a fishery for these rivers and staff may recommend deferring Commission action to a later date. Staff will continue to monitor returns of PIT-tagged salmon destined for the summer fishery areas.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Idaho Statute 36-104(b)2 gives the Commission the authority to make a rule or proclamation establishing seasons and methods for the taking of fish. Fishing Rules are provided in IDAPA 13.01.11

Public Involvement Process:

A public meeting to seek input on 2021 spring season Chinook salmon fisheries was held virtually on February 11th and an open comment period lasted from February 11-21. Idaho Department of Fish and Game Regional and Headquarter staffs hosted the meeting to provide information on 2021 projected salmon returns and to allow for public comment on potential 2021 seasons.

Staff Recommendation:

Continue to monitor Chinook returns and consider action at a later date if escapement is expected to be sufficient to support a fishery.

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 returning adult hatchery Chinook salmon produced at Idaho mitigation hatcheries.