

Meeting Date: March 24, 2022

Agenda Item No. 5C

Agenda Item: Season Setting, Spring Season Chinook
Salmon Fisheries

Bureau Chief Approval: LH

Prepared by: John Cassinelli, Anadromous Fish Manager

Background:

This agenda item concerns the setting of Chinook Salmon fishing seasons targeting adult anadromous Chinook Salmon in the Snake River, Lower Salmon River, Little Salmon River, Mainstem Clearwater River, North Fork Clearwater River, Middle Fork Clearwater River, and South Fork Clearwater River. Staff will review the 2022 forecasts and proposed fishing seasons. For all proposed fishing areas, sufficient numbers of hatchery salmon are forecasted to return in 2022 to provide sport fisheries that target the non-tribal harvestable share after brood stock targets are considered.

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:

Public meetings to seek input on 2022 spring Chinook Salmon seasons were held in Riggins, Lewiston, Orofino, Coeur d'Alene, Nampa, and Cascade during February. Fish and Game Regional staffs hosted each of the meetings to provide information on 2022 projected salmon returns and to allow for public comment on potential 2022 seasons.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the proposed 2022 fishing seasons for Chinook Salmon in the Snake River, Lower Salmon River, Little Salmon River, Mainstem Clearwater River, North Fork Clearwater River, Middle Fork Clearwater River, and South Fork Clearwater River.

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.