

Meeting Date: 22 August, 2019

Agenda Item No. 4D(2)

Agenda Item: Season Setting — Steelhead Fishery

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Lance Hebdon, Anadromous Fish Manager

Background:

This agenda item concerns fisheries targeting hatchery-origin Steelhead on the Salmon, Clearwater, Snake, and Boise rivers.

The steelhead forecast for 2019 is projected to be below average, especially for 2-ocean fish returning to the Clearwater River. Current counts of steelhead at Bonneville Dam are tracking consistent with the forecast. The low returns will necessitate the need to implement reductions to daily limits in the Clearwater River and possibly in the Snake and Salmon rivers. At the time of this Gold Sheet preparation, staff was monitoring escapement and developing modifications to the existing steelhead seasons and limits for discussion and action at the August 22 Commission meeting.

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 input has been received as part of the three-year season setting process that established the 2019-2021 steelhead seasons and rules.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the proposed adjustments to the 2019 Steelhead seasons for Salmon, Clearwater, Snake, and Boise rivers.

Justification:

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 harvest steelhead returning to the hatcheries.