

2008-09

**HOOD CANAL STEELHEAD
HARVEST MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Joint Report Prepared by:

**Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Point No Point Treaty Council
(for the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe)
Skokomish Tribe
Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe**

October 2008

INTRODUCTION

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Skokomish Tribe, the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, and the Point No Point Treaty Council (representing the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe), have prepared the following harvest management plan for the 2008-09 winter steelhead accounting period in Hood Canal. There is no current evidence of indigenous self-sustaining summer steelhead populations in Hood Canal. This plan establishes management guidelines for the steelhead resources of streams of Hood Canal, originating in WRIA 14, WRIA 15, WRIA 16 and WRIA 17 and of marine waters of Hood Canal (Marine Areas 12, 12A, 12B, 12C, 12D, 12H) and Port Gamble Bay (Marine Area 9A). Streams in the Skokomish Management Unit include the Skokomish River and its tributaries. Streams in the West Hood Canal Management Unit include the Hamma Hamma, the Duckabush, the Dosewallips, and the Big and Little Quilcene rivers and several independent streams. Streams in the East Hood Canal Management Unit include the Union, the Tahuya, and the Dewatto rivers and several smaller independent streams.

PREMISES AND FISHERY OBJECTIVES

The provisions of this plan cover all Treaty and non-treaty fisheries for steelhead occurring in Hood Canal streams and Hood Canal marine areas. The co-managers agree to a philosophy of cooperation in implementing management programs to maintain, perpetuate and enhance the steelhead resource and the natural ecosystem that supports it.

This plan is intended to ensure that Treaty and non-treaty fishermen, subject to their respective regulatory authorities, shall be afforded the opportunities to harvest their shares as determined in *United States v. Washington*, 384 F. Supp. 312, aff'd 520 F.2d 676 (9th Cir. 1975), cert. denied 423 U.S. 1086, aff'd sub nom *Washington v. Washington State Commercial Passenger Fishing Vessel Association*, 443 U.S. 658 (1979) and other orders under the court's continuing jurisdiction.

The management intent is to preserve harvest opportunity while not impeding recovery of steelhead populations.

The co-managers agree to enact and recommend for enactment by the Pacific Fishery Management Council and the Pacific Salmon Commission, appropriate regulations for marine salmonid fisheries that will provide for adequate escapement of steelhead into the Hood Canal watersheds to achieve the intent and purposes of this plan.

MANAGEMENT PERIODS

The management periods define the time interval during which regulatory actions are directed to meeting conservation and allocation needs of steelhead stocks while taking into account harvest (actual or expected) of steelhead occurring outside of the management periods. Since many runs extend over lengthy periods of time and only a small portion of the population of each run is available at the extremes of its run timing, it is impractical to exercise directed management for non selective fisheries on these portions of runs while continuing harvests of other species or stocks. Effort should be spread throughout the management periods to achieve escapement and catch from all segments of the runs.

Winter Steelhead

<u>Area</u>	<u>Management Period</u>
Area 9A	November 30 through March 31
Hood Canal Rivers	December 7 through April 15

Management periods for winter steelhead were established by reviewing historical information on the timing of recreational catches. The end of the management period was adjusted to match the beginning of the spring Chinook management period.

The catch accounting period for all Treaty Indian and non-treaty fisheries in Hood Canal management areas is November 1 - April 30 for winter run steelhead.

HARVEST MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Harvest Strategy Background

Hatchery reared steelhead smolts were stocked in several of the major Hood Canal streams for several decades to provide recreational and tribal fishing opportunities. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Chambers Creek / Bogachiel / Tokul Creek hatchery winter steelhead stock was used in most streams where hatchery reared steelhead smolts were released. In recent years, all hatchery reared steelhead smolts have been marked with an adipose-fin clip prior to release, in order to enable visual distinction between hatchery-reared steelhead and wild steelhead.

Treaty net fisheries have generally been targeted at earlier returning, often hatchery-reared, winter run steelhead recruits that were expected to return primarily from December through February. Treaty hook-and-line fisheries have extended into March.

In recent years, non-treaty recreational fisheries in Hood Canal streams have been primarily targeted at hatchery-reared steelhead. The recreational fishing season is closed during the spring to protect emigrating steelhead smolts and kelts. The season is open from June 1 through October 31 for game fish and wild (unmarked) steelhead release regulations have been in effect during this period in all freshwater areas since 1992 and in all marine areas since 1993. When hatchery-reared winter run steelhead are expected to return, the recreational winter steelhead season has been open from November 1 through the last day of February. Wild (unmarked) winter steelhead release regulations have been in effect in the Skokomish, Tahuya and Dewatto rivers since 1987, in all other Hood Canal rivers (when open during the winter steelhead season) since the 1994-95 season, and since 1993 in all marine areas. In addition, winter steelhead seasons have been closed in the Union, the Tahuya, and the Dewatto rivers since the 2004-05 season and in the Hamma Hamma, the Duckabush, and the Dosewallips rivers, beginning with the 2006-07 season.

Some additional incidental harvest of steelhead may have occurred during Treaty and non-treaty fisheries directed at harvesting other species of salmon in freshwater and marine areas of Hood Canal.

Table 1 summarizes the implementation dates for steelhead regulations for the recreational fishery and the last year hatchery winter steelhead smolts were released in Hood Canal streams.

Table 1. Implementation dates for wild steelhead regulations for recreational fisheries in Hood Canal streams; all other streams have been closed to all steelhead fishing.
(Source: Thom H. Johnson, WDFW, Hood Canal District Fish Biologist)

Stream	Winter steelhead WSR regulations implemented a/	Winter steelhead recreational closure implemented b/	Last year hatchery winter-run steelhead smolts released c/
<u>Hood Canal</u>			
Marine Areas	04/16/1993	--	--
Dewatto R.	02/01/1987	2004-05 season	1990
Tahuya R.	02/01/1987	2004-05 season	1994
Union R.	1994-95 season	2004-05 season	1994
Skokomish R.	01/01/1987	2007-08 season	2004
Hamma Hamma R.	1994-95 season	2006-07 season	--
Duckabush R.	1994-95 season	2006-07 season	2003
Dosewallips R.	1994-95 season	2006-07 season	2003
Big Quilcene R.	1994-95 season	2008-09 season	1990
Little Quilcene R.	1994-95 season	2008-09 season	--
a/ WSR = wild steelhead release b/ Winter steelhead season = Nov. 1 to Feb. 28 c/ These are only streams with hatchery winter-run steelhead smolts released in Hood Canal.			

Current Harvest Strategy

The release of hatchery-reared steelhead smolts, in Hood Canal streams, has been discontinued, with the last hatchery summer-run smolts released in 1981 and the last hatchery winter-run smolts released in 2004. Few, if any, hatchery winter or summer steelhead adults are expected to return to Hood Canal streams during the 2008-09 season (or in subsequent seasons).

Treaty Indian: Tribal subsistence fisheries have been limited to the Skokomish, the Hamma Hamma, the Dosewallips, the Duckabush, and the Big Quilcene rivers. Commercial fishery openings in these rivers may only be enacted by emergency inseason regulations based on inseason management considerations concerning the status of the stocks. The status of the stocks in 2008-09 does not appear to support commercial fisheries in Hood Canal rivers. A tribal commercial and subsistence fishery for steelhead occurs in Port Gamble Bay (Marine Area 9A). Some incidental harvest of steelhead may also occur during Treaty fisheries directed at harvesting other species of salmon in marine areas of Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca.