



**Executive Board Meeting Minutes**

**8-15-2022**

**Executive Board Members**

- President - Doug Saint-Denis - Present
- Vice President - Bob Kratzer - Present
- Secretary - Ryan Gausman - Present
- Treasurer - Jon Blank - Present
- Member at Large A - Marc Bush - Excused
- Advisory Member - Greg Kain - Present
- Advisory Member - Cameron Black – Absent
- Advisory Member - Camrin Johnson – Present
- Advisory Member - Eric Linde – Excused
- Advisory Member - Mark Coleman – Excused
- Advisory Member - Cary Hoffman – Excused

Called to order 1732 hrs

**Treasurer report:** Jon Blank \$8866.88 checking \$1826.30 Pay Pal, there is an outstanding check for \$376.44 which has not cleared

**June Minutes:** Approve

**Old Business:** an appreciation plaque was sent to Boat Insurance of Seattle

**New Business:**

Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences issued a paper, June 21, 2022 titled “Hatchery propagation did not reduce natural steelhead productivity.....” This is good reading and has a lot of good information which would be applicable here. WDFW would likely not be willing to consider it even though the principles would directly apply in Washington’s steelhead waters. This study established that hatchery fish do not negatively impact wild fish populations. Studies like this need to be put in front of Kelly Cunningham, the Commission, and the Guides’ Advisory Committee. Oregon and Idaho have published similar studies with similar conclusions.

Guides’ Advisory Committee: Limited entry is still a topic under discussion. A survey was sent but only went to committee members. The questions related to whether it would contribute to better regulatory compliance and whether it would improve safe high-quality experiences for customers.

Chris Donnelly from WDFW is collecting the information, he is not pushing for limited entry. A few GAC members are trying to get it established. There has always been a group of sportsmen who feel there are too many guides. The

President  
 Doug Saint-Denis  
 waguidesassociation@gmail.com

Vice President  
 Robert Kratzer  
 anglersguideservice@gmail.com

Secretary  
 Ryan Gausman  
 ironspuroutdoors@gmail.com

Treasurer  
 Jon Blank  
 jonsnwoutdoors@gmail.com

Member At Large A  
 Marc Bush  
 twistedwaters@gmail.com

Advisory Member 1  
 Greg Kain  
 greg.kain@me.com

Advisory Member 2  
 Cameron Black  
 gonecatchin@gmail.com

Advisory Member 3  
 Cary Hoffman  
 cnhguideservice@gmail.com

Advisory Member 4  
 Mark Coleman  
 mark@allwashingtonfishing.com

Advisory Member 5  
 Eric Linde  
 eplinde@comcast.net

Advisory Member 6  
 Camrin Johnson  
 johnson.camrin@yahoo.com



complainants are primarily private, non-guide, citizens who feel guides catch more fish than they do. The issue has always been a social issue, not a biological one, because fish populations have not been adversely affected by the fishing of guides. The log books were initiated in the hopes that they may provide data related to this.

The way to address this whole issue is to “clean up” our industry, we need rules, and consequences for violation of those rules, along with enforcement, to clean our “house” before going to limited entry. Washington is the only state where there are zero consequences to guides for wildlife violations. If we can remove those guides who are hurting our reputation in the eyes of the public it would do a lot to improve our appearance as an industry.

**FGOTO:**

**Bob Kratzer:** The Coastal Steelhead Advisory group met last week. The central subject of this group seems to be hatcheries. They are dividing rivers into sub groups. Coastal Rivers Above Escapement, are considered maintenance rivers and will receive hatchery plants. Below Escapement, will receive minimal hatchery plants, rivers way below would receive total closures for 3 years with minimum hatchery plants, with a reevaluation at the end of the 3 year closure. There may be elimination of all hatchery plants.

This group is essentially all non guides and would like to just close all the hatcheries. The people on this group are essentially Wild Fisheries Only Conservation People.

**Yakima River:** Ryan Gausman; The Kittitas County public works is renovating the bridge at the Green Bridge Boat Launch in Thorp. They published a closure period of August 1 through October. WDFW decided they would close the boat launch, unannounced, two weeks early on July 15 so the contractors could park equipment in the boat access area in preparation for the 3 month project. Initially guides, both fishing, and rafting, along with public river users, were still using the launch because the equipment was parked off to the side, out of the way of any conflict with launch users. WDFW enforcement started kicking boaters out even though there was no conflict. This is the third boat launch that has been closed this year in the upper Yakima River along with Bullfrog Rd, and Bristol Flats. The WDFW launch at hwys 97 and 10 is not useable for a takeout in the summer.

I wrote an email to WDFW launch people regarding the early closure at green bridge stating it was unnecessary and was posing an additional hardship on river users who had planned their schedules based upon the public works published dates. I received a response from Ross Huffman, Regional Wildlife Program Manager from Yakima. In his email he stated “WDFW did not ignore the anglers and guides and close the access site. We closed the site temporarily due to the construction which starts Aug 1 and will close the bridge to all use and create a safety hazard at the launch and we closed on July 15 when the contractor was going to begin staging equipment at the access site taking away space for vehicles/trailers to park and use the site” He added “we are well aware of the impacts it has on the river users but there was no other good course of action”. He also said “it is my understanding that the parking area is mostly full of vehicles,

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 waguidesassociation@gmail.com

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equipment, and supplies which does not provide enough room for full public use despite access to the ramp remaining open.” He said it’s unavoidable.

Ryan responded that, the guides and river users fully accept the need to close the access August 1 for bridge maintenance, our objection is that WDFW prevented, unannounced any launch or takeout or other modified use of the boat ramp even though it was proving to be successful for the few days it was being done. Ryan flew over the ramp and access are and photographed the area from his airplane, proving the contractor equipment was taking up very little of the space in the access and were not affecting the access to and from the boat ramp. Our concern was that some sort of modified agreement should have been worked out, and would have been, if WDFW was truly interested in working for its constituents, the users of the access points on the Yakima River. WDFW has made no effort to accommodate guides of other users of the upper Yakima River even though the combined closures have had considerable negative effect on our industry and county economics. WDFW chose not to respond to the followup.

The emails were copied to Representative Tom Dent, State Senator Judy Warnick, and the Kittitas County Board of County Commissioners. Judy Warnick forwarded a response from WDFW similar to the email described above.



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ironspu outdoors@gmail.com

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Cameron Black  
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Cary Hoffman  
cnhguideservice@gmail.com

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Eric Linde  
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Advisory Member 6  
Camrin Johnson  
johnson.camrin@yahoo.com



# WA State Guides Association

Representing WA State Sport Fishing Guides & Charters

waguidesassociation.org

Meeting adjourned: 1824 hrs

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Doug Saint-Denis  
waguidesassociation@gmail.com

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greg.kain@me.com

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