



## NSIA-2016 Recap and 2017 Priorities

### ***Carl Burke, NSIA's Government Affairs Representative in Olympia:***

We worked closely with our allies and with WDFW staff to have a stronger voice in last year's North of Falcon season-setting process. Successfully emphasizing to negotiators the necessity of fairly distributing the conservation burden for Puget Sound stocks led to more equitable harvest for all user groups. In follow up, we had a remarkable break through working with Director Unsworth and senior staff for in-season management that led to north Puget Sound streams opening for Coho last Fall despite some opposition.

We continued our work with legislative allies to ensure that the WDFW Commission members remain committed to conservation gains, given intense pressures. For example, NSIA and our champions in Olympia were successful in defeating a legislative attempt to overthrow the Willapa Bay plan.

NSIA effectively campaigned WDFW staff to allow the use of barbed hooks for summer steelhead in the months of June, July, and August beginning in 2017. We have been making progress on getting an agreement with WDFW staff to facilitate recycling summer run steelhead through August 2017!

We made further gains with a **Proclamation from Governor Inslee about the importance of sport fishing to fund conservation and create jobs in the state.**

The NSIA WA PAC was heavily involved in 2016 statewide legislative races to support our champions, winning in all 26 races that we participated in financially.

NSIA and our allies are currently in talks with WDFW Commissioners, the department, legislative champions and the Governor's office to ensure that the Agency keep its agreement and hold firm on the implementation of the two-state Columbia River Plan and to maintain the agreed-upon sportfishing allocations on the river.

### ***George Okulitch, NSIA's Government Affairs Representative in Salem:***

NSIA successfully worked with legislative leadership and the Governor's office to get Jim Martin, NSIA Science and Policy Board member, appointed to the Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife, and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education. In 2015 we effectively advocated for the Task Force to look at how we fund ODFW and present alternatives (non-user fee concepts) to the 2017 Legislature. Jim was a key member of the Task Force and consistently reminded other outdoor leaders about the important contributions of the angling community and businesses.

NSIA continues to grow legislative support for our causes. Several times during both the appointment process for the ODFW Commission, as well as fighting back against any changes to the Columbia River Reforms, we built a cadre of representatives and senators willing to sign letters and contact the Governor's office. This is a result of our attendance at candidate fundraisers and hosting meetings throughout the interim to educate people about NSIA's issues.

After years of being without Industry representation on the ODFW Commission, NSIA, working with the Governor's office was able to get Jim Bittle, a NSIA Board Member, appointed to a four-year term. NSIA convinced Governor Brown about the differences between people who like to fish and those who run fishing businesses. Jim Bittle's appointment is an historic first step in balancing the Oregon Commission.



NSIA met throughout 2016 with legislative leadership, Governor Kate Brown and her Chief of Staff, Kristen Leonard, regarding many issues, including the Columbia River Reforms, the Commission, spill, and many other issues directly impacting NSIA members. These meetings will continue throughout 2017 as we continue to push our issues in front of state elected public officials.

NSIA served on the External Budget Advisory Committee for ODFW. On this committee, NSIA pushed back against cuts to hatcheries, fish biologists, boat launches and other attempts to harm our businesses. In 2017, we are looking at finding additional ways to reduce the state costs on anglers throughout the state. Possible options include: reducing the cost of licensees and fees, allowing more family free fishing opportunities, and dedicating more angler dollars directly to angling related activities.

## NSIA State and Federal Recap

Over the past year, NSIA has been deeply involved with several key policy issues on the state and federal levels. NSIA's Executive Director, Liz Hamilton, continues to serve on several panels and boards that play important roles in steering the direction of West Coast fisheries. Through strategic positioning and help from allies we have a voice in the North of Falcon season setting process, and we remain in a committed fight to maintain the Columbia River reforms and continue to stand up for anglers and sportfishing businesses.

We have had success over the past year on a number of key habitat improvement issues. While less than what fish needed, we were successful in expanding Oregon's forest buffers for fish-bearing streams to keep rivers cooler for fish. We've stayed involved in the effort to remove the four lower Klamath River Dams. They are nearing removal due to an unrepresented joint effort between states, private industry, tribes, and federal agencies, a move that will hopefully put the Klamath back to its place as one of the most important salmon producing rivers in the lower 48. And NSIA is an integral player in the landmark federal court ruling that is forcing federal water and salmon managers to redraw their entire plan for the Columbia and Snake Rivers. It has the potential to be the biggest salmon and river restoration effort in history, and it would mean huge increases in fish and jobs. Liz was appointed by the Administration to serve on a recovery panel to assist the Feds with goals and planning. Additionally, we pushed the Obama Administration to put in place interim measures that will have immediate benefits to fish, such as increased spill and temperature abatement.

NSIA staff has put significant focus on enhancing public access to quality outdoor recreation areas and preserving areas of special interest such as the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument and the Owyhee Canyonlands, including commissioning a study on the Owyhees investigating the economic importance the canyonlands have on the local economy. **Public Lands in Public Hands sustains jobs!**

For nearly two years, NSIA has been meeting with State and Federal managers in discussions about Mitchell Act Hatchery reforms. As this program is reshaped to be a better partner in recovery, it is vital that the original mitigation obligations are not abandoned. We will stay at the table for you, fighting for the right balance for fish, fishing and the economy.

Whether it is working on important regional salmon recovery efforts or advocating for better access to quality fishing and recreation areas, NSIA is a key player in every major issue facing the sportfishing industry today. **We will continue to fight for the interests of you and your business in the coming year against all challenges.** With your support, we can both restore salmon runs across the Northwest and enhance fishing opportunities throughout the region.