Public Meeting on Salmon Forecast Kicks Off Season-Setting Process

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - Anglers, commercial fishers and others interested in Washington state salmon fisheries can get a preview of this year's salmon returns and potential fishing seasons during a public meeting here Feb. 28.Kicking off the annual salmon season-setting process, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will present initial forecasts - compiled by state and tribal biologists - of 2012 salmon returns.The meeting is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in room 172 of the Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington Street S.E., in Olympia.Those attending the meeting will have an opportunity to talk to fishery managers about the pre-season forecasts and participate in work sessions focusing on possible salmon fisheries and conservation issues.WDFW has also scheduled additional public meetings focusing on regional salmon issues through early April. A meeting schedule and more information about the salmon season-setting process is available on WDFW's website at http://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/northfalcon/ .Public review of the pre-season forecasts traditionally marks the start of the North of Falcon process, which brings state, tribal and federal fishery managers together to establish salmon seasons for Puget Sound, the Columbia River and the Washington coast.The North of Falcon process is held in conjunction with public meetings conducted by the Pacific Fishery Management Council (PFMC), responsible for establishing fishing seasons in ocean water three to 200 miles off the Pacific coast.Final adoption of the 2012 salmon fisheries is scheduled for April 6 at the PFMC meeting in Seattle.