

January 8, 2003

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Council Members

**FROM:** Karl Weist

**SUBJECT:** Presentation on the work of the Citizens' Forum

Lynne Buchanan Chamberlain, Board Member of the Oregon Wheat Growers League, and Kathryn Brigham, Member of the Board of Trustees of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and representatives of the Citizens' Forum will update Council members on the activities of the Citizens' Forum and detail a recent white paper the Forum has developed.

Enclosed are a memo describing the Citizens' Forum and its purpose, the current membership of the Forum, and the White Paper on Hatcheries and Salmon Recovery.

November 2002

The Regional Citizens' Forum

The Citizens' Forum is a decision-making group, driven by people who live in the river regions of the Pacific Northwest, and have a direct stake in the process of fish recovery. These river users, despite disparate views on many issues are committed to maintaining economic prosperity, social and cultural values, progress on solving environmental problems of the region and shared goals for salmon recovery.

We have come to consensus on an issue involving hatchery and wild fish and are seeking your signatory support on behalf of your organization. Following is the **Citizens' Forum White Paper on Wild and Hatchery Fish**. We have included information about the organization, its formation and participants. It is our intent to use our many voices on this issue (*consensus signatures on this document*) to give weight to governmental representatives, to make leadership decisions.

We thank you in advance for your support and participation.

The Citizens Forum

Chairman Gary Burke, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla

Representative Lynne Chamberlain Buchanan  
Oregon Wheat Growers

## The Citizens Forum

The debate over salmon recovery in the Columbia River and Snake River basins has been long and contentious. It has grown to be more and more partisan, more expensive and more frustrating for the grassroots citizens whose very lives are directly impacted by the perceived inability of the government-driven, top-down attempts to find workable solutions to salmon recovery.

It is in this environment that representatives of the CTUIR and OWGL agreed to begin working directly with one another in July 1999 in an attempt to find viable solutions for salmon recovery that government could not. While Indians and wheat growers had traditionally been positioned on opposing sides of the salmon recovery debate, both had come to the same conclusion: a grassroots driven solution is what is needed to successfully bring the debate to a reasonable conclusion.

Talks began and proceeded over the next year. All parties discovered commonly held values and that they were seeking many of the same outcomes to preserve long-held traditions and lifestyles for both present and future generations. Interests and concerns in the following areas were identified:

Economic – commodity transportation, irrigation, power generation, jobs, rural  
Community vitality, important role of salmon in subsistence Indian  
Economies, recreation

Social/Cultural/Religious – cultural/traditional ceremonies, cultural/traditional  
Sites, diet/health

Environmental/Physical – consequences of alternative power sources and  
Transportation modes, water quality, extinction  
of salmon.

It was acknowledged that humans living in a natural environment necessitates change to physical aspects of the natural environment.

## Goals and Objectives

CTUIR and OWGL discussion participants, in addition to discovering commonly held interests and values, found they agreed on a number of common goals:

1. recovery of salmon
2. keeping people and economies whole;
3. transition periods with any actions taken to allow for adjustment to change;
4. process should be people driven; and
5. solutions should provide a more certain world both in terms of salmon availability and the business decision environment.

By September 2000, the CTUIR, OWGL, the Washington Association of Wheat Growers and the Idaho Grain Producers Association were all able to pass resolutions embracing these goals and a commitment to move forward in the search for solutions.

Because of the multi-faceted, complex nature of the debate over salmon recovery and the potential impacts on the economy of the Pacific Northwest, CTUIR and the OWGL undertook efforts to expand membership in the evolving “Citizens Forum.” Participants were identified and sought that, foremost, would bring an open mind and desire for fresh, collaborative thinking. It was also essential that participants be grounded in at least one—and preferably more—constituencies in order to reflect the wide diversity of interests of citizens living in the Columbia and Snake River basins. And, while participants were not invited to represent any particular association or entity, there were not expected to divest themselves of those relationships during the course of the talks. Outside of tribal governments, government participation is not anticipated until the implementation stage of the process.

The first meeting of the Citizens’ Forum was held in February 2001. The purpose of the meeting was to provide each participant an opportunity to learn the motivations, hopes and concerns of the others; to discover what mutually shared interests might be explored in the future; and to garner commitments for continuing participation.

With one exception, all participants of this meeting agreed to continue as Citizens’ Forum Members and have met every four to six weeks in various communities from Astoria to Lewiston. Forum members have developed a clearer understanding of the complexity of the issues and the myriad interests and investments each Forum member has in pursuit of a solution., Participants agree that good processes and approaches lead to good products, even though at this stage in the deliberations the form of the Forum’s products are not known. Importantly, participants adopted the CTUIR’s and OWGL’s five goals and honed a mission statement to reflect the goal of the Citizens’ Forum:

“To cooperatively and openly work together to restore sustainable fish runs and enhance economic opportunities for the Pacific Northwest.”

Forum members have agreed to focus their efforts on the following objectives over the next months as they establish procedures for implementing action plans:

1. Change the focus from the polarizing dam breaching degvate to what can we do to improve conditions for salmon and better support economies that are affected on the Snake River mainstem.
2. Determine what best practices are contained in existing salmon recovery plans That could be promoted under the auspices of Forum and its broad spectrum of interest groups to improve conditions for salmon and better support economies that are affected.
3. Influence the direction of funds being spent on projects that will provide the maximum benefit to salmon and equitably share the burden of recovery.

Seeking consensus, Forum members are presently discussing benchmarks for salmon and economic recovery to serve as criteria to evaluate practices in existing salmon recovery plans. The best practices that meet the standards of the Citizens' Forum will be promoted.

Citizens' Forum membership is representative of the interests of a majority of residents of the Columbia River and Snake River basins in Oregon, Washington and Idaho. While Forum membership is by invitation, each member is selected based on his or her affiliations with interest groups representative of citizens impacted in myriad ways by the need to find solutions to the problem of salmon recovery. The needs include creating new economic opportunities, especially in rural communities.

Members are volunteering to participate because:

1. They are seeking pro-active proposals they can live with, rather than having to constantly react, often negatively, to government agency actions or court-directed solutions; of their willingness to test the interest-based approach to finding solutions—based on experience gained in the Umatilla River salmon recovery project and
2. of a desire to prove that it is possible to bypass the partisanship and the divisiveness that has characterized the dam removal debate.

While many of the member's organizations are and will continue to be involved in fish-related litigation, there is a strong commitment by members to participate in the Forum process. They believe they will be more effective by collaboratively making decisions for fish restoration.

#### Projected Process

If the process is successful results will encompass:

1. stakeholders including Citizens Forum's recommended actions and initiatives in projects that enhance salmon recovery while supporting the development of economic opportunities.
2. linkages made between the plans of other stakeholder groups and how funding is directed—including government agencies—to accommodate and not conflict with the Citizens Forum's action agenda;
3. broad-based public acceptance of the conclusions and solutions agreed to by the Citizens Forum; and
4. support for the Citizens Forum conclusions and solutions be elected and agency policy makers.

*Cooperatively and openly  
working together to restore  
sustainable fish runs and  
preserve the economy of the  
inland northwest.*

# Citizen's Economic & Fish Recovery Forum

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## Citizens' Forum White Paper on Hatcheries and Salmon Recovery

Salmon recovery efforts within the Columbia River Basin have become mired in the continuing debate regarding the relative merits of "hatchery vs. wild." The debate itself is all too often used as a thinly disguised attempt to advance unspoken agendas such as harvest restriction and habitat restoration. It is our position that these agendas must be debated upon their own respective merits and that the responsible use of hatcheries is an issue that should be put to rest. State and federal salmon policies should promote optimum and sustainable fish populations for their biological, harvest and aesthetic values.

It is imperative that we use all recovery and conservation tools available. Current and proposed policies, which ignore the utility and importance of hatcheries, have produced significant disruption and have hindered progress in salmon recovery efforts across the Pacific Northwest.

Hatcheries cannot and should not be considered a panacea for salmon recovery. Countless other impediments are unaffected by hatchery construction or operation. The reality of our current situation requires that all available tools for the rebuilding of anadromous fish stocks should be available for use. Hatcheries are one such tool. Arguments that discourage their use in a biologically and genetically responsible manner are ill-advised and short-sighted.

A holistic overview of the Columbia-Snake River would have to include its role as an immense and magnificent natural hatchery. For the immediate and foreseeable future the responsible use of artificial habitat (hatcheries) to replace some lost natural hatchery functions must be employed to forestall continued extinction and to maintain the livelihoods of communities which are dependent upon harvestable salmon for their spiritual and economic well being. We are compelled to use supplemental habitat to support rebuilding efforts and community health.

Salmon recovery plans that oppose the use of hatcheries base the majority of their opposition on a four-fold premise: (1) Salmon and steelhead, which are native to a watershed, have evolved over centuries to be ideally suited to survive within that unique environment; (2) Hatchery-reared juvenile salmonids are genetically inferior and physically weaker than their "wild" brethren; (3) Upon release, hatchery fish compete with fish spawned in-stream and negatively impact the survivability of the "wild" offspring; and (4) Interbreeding between "hatchery" and "wild" stocks will weaken the "wild" fish and reduce the likelihood of recovery.

No one denies the amazing impact of natural selection. Evolution fine-tunes characteristics necessary for survival and is a basic requirement for all species. The biological mechanism resulting in slow alteration of genetics would be a seemingly inarguable game-ending point in favor of anti-hatchery advocates. A perfectly evolved animal living in a distinct and discrete environment is clearly the ideal. The fallacy of using this argument to discourage the use of hatcheries rests in the environment itself. How many watersheds within the Columbia Basin have survived into this century unaltered? What salmonid species has had the necessary generations to evolve to match today's ecosystem niche? The clear answer to survival of any salmon or steelhead within the Columbia Basin lies within the fish themselves. The resiliency and adaptability of these magnificent creatures have allowed the survival of the species in the face of untold harm and unimaginable loss. Even the most biased observer of hatchery-bred salmon adults spawning in countless watersheds could not deny that resiliency and adaptability are not removed at the hatchery.

Studies indicating higher adult return percentages from smolts originating in-stream as opposed to smolts released from a hatchery are used to illustrate the inherent superiority of "wild" fish. In reality, these studies highlight a totally different effect. Fish culturists are very aware that hatchery practices protect

large numbers of juveniles that would not survive in the stream environment. Consequently, a high percentage of hatchery-reared smolts are unable to meet the natural challenges presented upon release. It is a fact that nature will not be denied. Natural mortality that is delayed in the hatchery setting is accelerated upon release. We are unaware of any study comparing the relative survivability of eggs hatched in-stream versus those within a hatchery. Pending the results of such a study, we will discount this erroneously drawn conclusion of the anti-hatchery forces.

The inconsistency of supposedly weak hatchery smolts out-competing their stream-hatched brethren is curious in itself. It is unclear how an unfit animal forces a specifically evolved, fit animal out of its niche environment. The competition argument also fails to account for fish behavior following smoltification. The remarkable metamorphosis of smoltification triggers the first act of anadromy. A hardwired biological imperative directs smolts to begin their seaward journey. Properly sized hatchery reared fish released at optimal times will treat the waterway as a migration corridor rather than a feeding environment.

Genetic issues are the single greatest roadblock to the use of hatcheries as a recovery and mitigation tool. We do not subscribe to the idea that “a fish is a fish.” However, we can all agree that *no* fish is *no* fish. Genetic integrity is a basic principle that must be preserved within the recovery effort. The use of genetic strains native to watersheds as parent stock should be mandated whenever such fish still exist. Successful restocking of many endangered species has employed artificial habitat. We advocate continuing the model for salmonids in the Pacific Northwest. Interbreeding ceases to be a concern when genetic integrity is maintained. We support a program of genetic selection that most clearly matches the indigenous salmon population for those fish runs that have been extirpated.

There are several models of responsible hatchery operation within the region. The program of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the soon-to-be-operational Nez Perce hatchery are prime examples. Professional fish culturists within state and federal agencies have developed programs that meet the highest standards of recovery and supplementation. We applaud their efforts and seek to advance their work through increased and stable long-term governmental funding.

Extinction is not an option that we will accept. Living museum remnants of once great salmon runs are not an option that we will accept. Continued degradation of the economic and spiritual quality of salmon-dependant communities is not an option. Valuable tools designed to prevent extinction and provide abundance must not be eliminated.

We sign below as supporting this document entitled “The Citizens’ Forum White Paper on Hatcheries and Salmon Recovery” as a tool to give weight to leadership in decision-making on this issue to promote sustainable fish populations for biological, harvest and aesthetic values, and to prevent

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