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March 30, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Council Members

FROM: John Shurts

SUBJECT: Update on the NOAA Hatchery Review

The agenda for the April meeting includes an update on the recently initiated NOAA Hatchery Review and its implications for the work of the Council. Last month's meeting included an introductory briefing from Jim Waldo, hired by NOAA to oversee this collaborative effort.

The appropriations language charging NOAA to conduct this review required it also to work with the Council and others to make it happen.¹ The Council staff has been talking with Mr. Waldo and his associates so that we can become more clear about what that initiative hopes to accomplish, make them aware of what the Council is working on, and find the areas of overlap and mutual assistance. There are obvious overlaps with a number of Council efforts, including artificial production reform, on-going work to improve the regional frameworks for monitoring and evaluation and data management, and, especially, the work to integrate artificial production actions and policies with habitat, harvest and mainstem plans and the development of program objectives on that foundation.

From these discussions I have a fairly good sense of what the NOAA hatchery review will be about, and thus some suggestions about how the Council might work with and benefit from the review. But Mr. Waldo hopes to produce a workplan for this effort by the end of March, which we should be able to see a few days after. So rather than give here my informed but informal sense of what that review will be about, I prefer to wait until we have that information direct from the horse's mouth (so to speak) in the form of the workplan. We will forward that to the Council when it arrives, along with a memorandum assessing the Council's interests in the review and its products. We expect the agenda time in Whitefish to focus on a summary of the work, products and timelines that Waldo and NOAA expect, and how those synch up with what the Council is involved or interested in, with guidance then back to staff about how to engage.

¹ "The Committee continues its interest in efforts to reform hatchery operations in the Columbia River Basin. The Committee directs the NMFS to work with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, State agencies, and tribes to reform hatchery programs by replicating the Puget Sound and Coastal Washington Hatchery Reform Project." *Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill for FY 2006*.