

Tom Karier  
Chair  
Washington

Frank L. Cassidy Jr.  
"Larry"  
Washington

Jim Kempton  
Idaho

W. Bill Booth  
Idaho



Joan M. Dukes  
Vice-Chair  
Oregon

Melinda S. Eden  
Oregon

Bruce A. Measure  
Montana

Rhonda Whiting  
Montana

February 14, 2007

## DISCUSSION MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Council members

**FROM:** Peter Paquet, Manager Wildlife and Resident Fish

**SUBJECT:** Report on Schedule for NOAA Hatchery Reform Project

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the schedule and progress that has been made by the Hatchery Science Review Group (HSRG) since we last reported to you. This work is of importance to the Council since it is anticipated that the products of this process will provide the technical basis for developing provincial objectives. Of particular interest to the Council is the refinement of the "All H Analyzer" or AHA tool that is being used in this process. This was the tool that was developed to assist with the Council sponsored Artificial Production and Evaluation Process (APRE) and which builds off the EDT model used in Subbasin Planning. Additionally, the final product will aid in future updates of subbasin plans, particularly the integration of the hatchery component that was identified as a weakness in the initial plans.

## BACKGROUND

In December, the HSRG completed its review of the Lower Columbia River and estuary salmon and steelhead populations on both the Washington and Oregon sides. The HSRG met in January to "roll-up" the results of those reviews into a Province/ESU-wide set of recommendations for the managers to address conservation and harvest goals. The HSRG members have met with WDFW and ODFW representatives to discuss a number of ways to shift production levels between the two sides of the river in order to meet the TRT Washington Recovery Plan goals for conservation of listed stocks. With conservation as its primary concern and foundation, the HSRG also proposed potential ways to shift hatchery production harvest regimes, including the potential to increase production on stocks that will be of key interest during the US Canada

Treaty negotiations. The HSRG will produce a report of its finding this month. The All H Analyzer and Managing for Success tools have allowed the scientists and managers to integrate the H's in this ESU for the first time.

The contractors and HSRG have made significant progress on gathering baseline data for the Columbia Basin as a whole and populating the management tools with that information. This data will be analyzed under the five alternatives in NOAA's Mitchell Act DEIS. The data is also key to the HSRG continuing to make progress on reviewing populations in the mid- and upper Columbia and Snake Rivers.

WDFW and ODFW have also taken the opportunity to meet with members of the fishing community to keep them apprised of how the reviews are progressing.

In terms of funding, we have now hit the gap that we discussed with you earlier. The NOAA project is short approximately \$600,000 to \$700,000 in our current budget. Congress authorized NOAA Fisheries to appropriate \$200,000 for the project in 2007. Given the delay in federal dollars becoming available and the uncertainties of the level of funding, the project has been forced to develop contingency plans for a longer process, alternative funding arrangements or some combination. Since the project has solid support both from the administration and from key members of Congress, there is every reason to be very confident that the funds will eventually become available through FY 2008.

A contingency plan has been developed that continues to allow for building on the momentum that has been gained, while stretching remaining funds as far as possible. In order to minimize travel costs, the HSRG has reduced its meetings to two days per month through June. This means the HSRG will not be able to conduct additional reviews above Bonneville Dam until additional funding is available.

Meanwhile, the project management team is working vigorously to secure additional funds to bridge the funding gap and ensure project continuity. Discussions are being held with Bonneville and other regional entities.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Council continues to see the need for technical work that “rolls up” the subbasin plans and other information and activities in the basin. The purpose is to get a rough but useful sense of what might be the collective result of all this activity on populations and their habitat conciliations at a province or ESU scale. We need to do this not just to complete the technical roll-up work that was started during the Council’s Artificial Production Review and Evaluation process, but also for developing scenarios with different sets of actions and objectives and getting a rough sense in return as to what the population results might be for these different scenarios.

The AHA method is suitable for this purpose, and so we need to complete the AHA work. This means verifying the rest of the data inputs, running the results by stock, and then rolling up or aggregating the inputs and producing the results for the select species in each province.

This information will or may be of use to the Council and others for a number of reasons, ranging from hatchery reform, to project selection, to recovery planning, to harvest discussions, and so forth. But the primary benefits to the Council is the insights it will provide in preparation for an effort to develop quantitative biological objectives for the program. Completing the technical work is a prerequisite to beginning such a policy effort, and the schedule for completing the AHA work will drive the timing of the initiation of the objective setting effort.