



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 23, 2004

Contact: Mark Glyde
Communications Director
Long Live the Kings
(206) 382-9555, ext. 26
(206) 972-0276 (cell)

Science Panel Offers New Model for Hatchery Management to Help Recover Washington's Salmon, Support Sustainable Fisheries

Implementation of reform measures next step for Puget Sound and Coastal Washington Hatchery Reform Project

SEATTLE, WA — After four years of evaluation the team of independent scientists leading the Hatchery Reform Project today released a groundbreaking new report for reform of the Puget Sound and coastal Washington hatchery system to achieve two goals: help recover wild salmon and steelhead populations, and support sustainable fisheries.

The work of the nine-member Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) ranges from more than 1,000 recommendations for program-level changes at more than 100 hatcheries, to a new model for hatchery management, embodied in the scientists' Principles for Hatchery Management and System-Wide Recommendations.

The HSRG's work represents a fundamental rethinking of the role of hatcheries:

- a hatchery should be viewed not as a substitute for habitat, but as an extension of it — a productive tributary of the watershed in which it resides;
- the success of a hatchery should be measured not by the number of fish released, but by the quality of adult returns;
- hatchery operations should be considered in light of what the available habitat can sustain and the needs of wild populations in the watershed.

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife director Jeff Koenings and Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission chairman Billy Frank, Jr., were joined by Governor Gary Locke, U.S. Representative Norm Dicks (D-Wash), and HSRG chair Lars Moberg in making today's announcement of the reform measures.

"The Hatchery Reform Project has provided a road map for how hatcheries can be managed to balance the complex and related interests of Tribal treaty rights, sports fishing, and salmon recovery," said Congressman Dicks. "I will work to extend federal support into the critical implementation phase of hatchery reform."

The federal investment in the science, management, and implementation of hatchery reform by the state and Tribal co-managers topped \$20 million through the end of 2004. State lawmakers provided an additional \$8 million in last year's biennial budget for reform measures at state-run hatcheries.

“The collaborative approach of the Hatchery Reform Project and the integration of science and policymaking won bipartisan support for funding in last year’s biennial budget and is worthy of continued support from state lawmakers,” said Governor Locke.

In addition to providing site-specific and system-wide recommendations, the HSRG report contains the tools necessary to implement reform, including a scientific framework, a benefit/risk assessment model, new operational guidelines for hatcheries, an applied research program, and monitoring and evaluation criteria.

“There are hatchery reform efforts in other parts of the country, but I know of none with both a vision for the future and clearly described actions for immediate change — change that is already underway,” said HSRG chair Lars Moberg. “This is a new era of hatchery management.”

The salmon co-managers — Washington state and Tribal governments — have agreed with the majority of the HSRG’s recommendations and have already begun implementing them.

“The Tribes have long been leaders in putting the best available science into practice to protect and restore salmon. We embrace hatchery reform as another step on the road towards wild salmon recovery,” said Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission chair Billy Frank, Jr.

“The state is committed to moving ahead with hatchery reform,” added Jeff Koenings, director of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. “When this unique process began four years ago, our goal was to come up with a first-rate plan to guide hatchery operations into the 21st century. I’m confident we’ve done just that.”

The reform measures released today are based on the review of ten regions in Puget Sound and coastal Washington. The regions reviewed are the Nooksack/Samish, Skagit, Stillaguamish/Snohomish, Central Sound, South Sound, Hood Canal, Eastern Straits, North Coast, Grays Harbor, and Willapa Bay.

Congress created and funded the Puget Sound and Coastal Washington Hatchery Reform Project in 2000. The project is a unique partnership of independent science, Tribal and state co-managers, and federal agency participation, with third-party project facilitation and policy coordination provided by Long Live the Kings, a nonprofit wild salmon restoration organization.

Copies of the HSRG report, press materials, and other project publications are available at www.hatcheryreform.org. For B-roll film, contact Mark Glyde at (206) 382-9555, ext. 26.

####