

MEETING SUMMARY

Hatchery Scientific Review Group Hawthorn Inn & Suites, Arlington, Washington October 17–19, 2001

Agenda: The purpose of this meeting was to complete the regional review of the Stillaguamish and Snohomish Rivers region.

In Attendance:

- HSRG members John Barr (vice chair), Lee Blankenship (vice chair), Don Campton, Trevor Evelyn, Connie Mahnken, Lars Mobernd (chair), Bob Piper and Bill Smoker. Alternate Paul Dorn attended on October 17.
- Facilitation team members Barbara Cairns (October 19), Kathleen Hopper, Michael Kern, Bj Mirk, Michael Schmidt (October 17) and Jim Waldo.
- Regional participants Marianna Alexandersdottir, Kyle Brakensiek and Willy Eldridge, NWIFC; Kip Killebrew and Shawn Yanity, Stillaguamish Tribe; Cliff Bengston and Kit Rawson, Tulalip Tribes; Charmane Ashbrook, Mike Chamblin, Doug Hatfield, Curt Kraemer, Chuck Lavier, Darrell Mills, Chuck Phillips, Jack Tipping and Jed Varney, WDFW joined the Scientific Group on October 19 for an informal review of the region. Curt Kraemer and Chuck Phillips, WDFW and Kit Rawson, Tulalip Tribes joined the Scientific Group on October 17 to clarify key regional issues.

Discussions/Presentations:

On October 17, Jim Waldo welcomed Scientific Group members to the meeting and reviewed the agenda. Michael Kern reviewed the meeting materials. Jim then welcomed Chuck Phillips, Curt Kraemer and Kit Rawson, who had been asked to clarify some key regional issues for the Scientific Group. Curt discussed several issues related to steelhead in the region. Kit provided preliminary data from an otolith study on the contribution of hatchery fish to the Tulalip Bay fishery and to natural and hatchery spawning escapement.

The Scientific Group spent the bulk of the meeting completing the worksheets it has developed to implement its Benefit/Risk Assessment Tool. The group agreed that it would review the Part 1 (Summary of Goals and Current Hatchery Programs) and Part 3 (Culture Methods Evaluation, Accountability/Education Evaluation, Physical/Morphological/Ecological Evaluation, Genetics/Conservation Evaluation) worksheets as part of the process of using them to complete Part 2 (Is Current Hatchery Program Consistent with Long-Term and Short-Term Goals?) and Part 4 (Recommendations and Alternatives) at this meeting. The Part 3 task teams will also take responsibility for ensuring their respective worksheets are complete and accurate.

The Scientific Group prepared for the informal review by considering each sub-regional species and recording the identified benefits/risks and resulting recommendations/observations on flip charts. The group also entered this information into the Parts 2 and 4 worksheets.

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The final day of the regional review meeting was spent conducting an informal review, at which the Scientific Group provided the regional managers with preliminary observations and recommendations. These recommendations were grouped into the following categories:

- Region-wide,
- Snohomish sub-region overview,
- Skykomish summer chinook,
- Snohomish winter and summer steelhead,
- Skykomish coho,
- Tulalip Bay coho,
- Tulalip Bay chum,
- Tulalip Bay spring chinook,
- Tulalip Bay summer chinook,
- Tulalip Bay fall chinook,
- Stillaguamish sub-region overview,
- Stillaguamish North Fork chinook,
- Stillaguamish North Fork chum,
- Stillaguamish South Fork chum,
- Stillaguamish coho,
- Stillaguamish North Fork summer steelhead,
- Stillaguamish South Fork summer steelhead,
- Stillaguamish winter steelhead.

After the informal review, the Scientific Group discussed the process for revising the regional review tools prior to the next set of reviews. The group decided that a draft, revised version of the Benefit/Risk Tool should be ready for consideration at the November meeting. As part of these revisions, each Part 3 task team will review their worksheet(s). The Scientific Group will incorporate monitoring and evaluation questions into the Part 3 worksheets and review the October 2001 version of the state and tribal co-managers' Benefit/Risk Assessment Procedure, to ensure continued compatibility. The group will also review draft monitoring and evaluation criteria and a list of draft smolt quality measures at the November meeting.

The Scientific Group then discussed the report it will be authoring during the final months of 2001. The group agreed to write one report, featuring an executive summary, introduction, and one chapter for each of the ten regions to be reviewed. The first version of this report will include the three pilot regions. The report will be concise and succinct, designed to be read by busy policy-makers. It will focus on the regional review process and tools, regional context, and regional recommendations. Each regional chapter will be built around the four parts of the benefit/risk tool worksheets: goals, operations, benefits and risks, recommendations. Supporting documents—containing the information and tools that led to the recommendations—will also be available, but not included in the report. Target audiences for the report include Congress, the administration, the Washington State Legislature, the Washington State Office of Financial Management, the governor, the fisheries management agencies, and stakeholder groups. The

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report and its supporting documentation will be available electronically from the Hatchery Reform Project web site. Each chapter of the report will be available separately.

Barbara Cairns and Michael Kern presented a Hatchery Reform Project communications update. They provided a press release from Congressman Norm Dicks' office, reporting that the project came out of the Interior Appropriations conference slated to receive \$4 million for FY 2002. They reported that Don Campton and Kathy Hopper will be making a presentation on the project at the Wild Steelhead Coalition's November 7 meeting. They also reported that on October 16, a Scientific Group task team met with the Elwha Fisheries Technical Group (EFTG) in Seattle. The HSRG and EFTG spent the day brainstorming solutions to specific operational questions relating to the use of hatcheries that the EFTG will face in implementing the Elwha Restoration Plan. This meeting concluded several months of work on the subject by the task team. The EFTG said that the session was of great use to them.

Jim Waldo led a discussion in which the Scientific Group chair and vice chairs updated the group on the September 28 meeting of the Hatchery Reform Coordinating Committee. At that meeting, the Coordinating Committee was brought up to date on the Regional Review process. The Committee began a discussion on implementation of the Scientific Group's recommendations for the pilot regions. They also discussed what the Hatchery Reform Project's priorities should be for 2002, given a reduced level of funding from 2001, and agreed that they should be as follows: 1) a second round of regional reviews; 2) implementing recommendations for regions already reviewed; 3) substantially reducing the research program, while continuing key current research.

The Scientific Group agreed with these priorities, decided to resume regional reviews in February, and to review the following regions in 2002:

- Skagit River Basin (two months),
- Nooksack/Samish Rivers (two months),
- Central Puget Sound (three months),
- A coastal region (two months).

The Scientific Group accepted an invitation for the chair and vice chairs to meet with WDFW Director Koenings to discuss how to use the Scientific Group's draft recommendations to help direct the current round of budget reduction requests from the governor and the upcoming capital budget request for the next biennium. The group agreed that it was good for the state, tribal and federal technical personnel in the pilot regions to have internal meetings to discuss what they heard at their respective informal review sessions; in advance of the written report being issued (these meetings are planned for October 26, October 29 and November 2). The agencies will provide the results of these meetings to the Scientific Group, for consideration at the November meeting.

The Scientific Group ended the meeting by discussing a preliminary agenda for the November and December meetings. The December meeting will include an introductory session with participants from the next region to be reviewed.