

MEETING SUMMARY

Hatchery Scientific Review Group John Wayne Marina, Sequim, Washington May 16–18, 2001

Agenda: The purpose of this meeting was to begin the regional review of the Eastern Straits of Juan de Fuca.

In Attendance:

- HSRG members John Barr (vice chair), Lee Blankenship (vice chair), Don Campton, Trevor Evelyn, Connie Mahnken, Lars Mobernd (chair), Bob Piper, Lisa Seeb, and alternate Paul Dorn (Paul was not in attendance on May 16–17).
- Facilitation team members Barbara Cairns, Kathy Hopper, Michael Kern, Bj Mirk and Jim Waldo.
- Regional participants Mike McHenry and Larry Ward, Elwha Klallam Tribe; Scott Chitwood, Byron Rot and Ann Seiter, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe; Marianna Alexandersdottir, Kyle Brakensiek and Willy Eldridge, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC); Brian Winter, Olympic National Park; Chris Weller, Point no Point Treaty Council; Donald Haring, Washington State Conservation Commission; and Ann Blakley, Martin Chen, Bill Freymond, Anne Marshall, Darrell Mills, Don Rapelje, Dick Rogers and Paul Seidel, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) joined the Scientific Group to provide their perspectives and answer questions on May 17.

Discussions/Presentations:

The regional review began on the evening of May 15 with a tour of WDFW's Snow Creek facility. Field tours continued on May 16. In the morning, regional participants provided the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (Scientific Group) with a tour of the Dungeness River watershed, including Dungeness Bay, Schoolhouse Bridge, Hurd Creek Hatchery, Railroad Bridge Park, Agnew Irrigation Screens, and Dungeness Hatchery. In the afternoon, regional participants provided the Scientific Group with a tour of the Elwha River watershed, beginning with a basin overview presentation at the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribal Headquarters, followed by visits to the Lower Elwha Hatchery, Elwha Rearing Channel, Elwha Dam, and Glines Canyon Dam.

On May 17, Jim Waldo welcomed Scientific Group members and regional participants to the meeting and reviewed the agenda. He explained that the purpose of the day was for those most familiar with the region's hatcheries, their objectives, and the environment in which they operate to more fully discuss the information provided by the briefing book and field tours. After this meeting, the Scientific Group will work with regional participants to fill in any remaining information gaps, then reconvene in one month to discuss the region and share their preliminary conclusions at an informal management review meeting. The Scientific Group will not write up

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its final report on the region until after it completes all three pilot regional reviews in October 2001.

The first subject the Scientific Group and regional participants discussed was Regional Management Goals. Bill Freymond explained that state and tribal representatives from the region had worked together to come up with one document answering the Scientific Group's questions on this topic. The document was included in the briefing books. Bill said that there is no harvest objective for Dungeness chinook, but there is one for Dungeness coho. Dungeness fall and summer pinks are in a depressed state, so there is no harvest objective for them either. But there is one for Dungeness winter steelhead. Little is known about summer steelhead, but they are considered native.

On the Elwha, the goals focus on maintaining stocks prior to dam removal and recovering them after removal. There is a harvest goal on Elwha coho. The status of Elwha pink is unknown, as is that of summer steelhead. Scott Chitwood emphasized that there are also important social, cultural, ceremonial, subsistence and educational objectives in the watershed, especially for the tribe. Chris Weller stated that the tribal plan for the Elwha is for a recovery that allows the phasing out of the use of hatcheries, but with a recognition that uncertainty and the need for treaty harvest may necessitate keeping hatcheries in the picture.

The Scientific Group and regional participants agreed that several additional items needed to be explicitly stated as conservation goals. These include adding nutrients to the rivers via salmon carcasses, and the long-term recovery of chinook salmon. The Scientific Group and regional participants agreed that the goal of maintaining harvest needed to be better explained and quantified in the materials provided. The regional participants recognized the need to have further conversations on the long-term future of Elwha chinook hatchery programs. The Scientific Group and regional participants also agreed that hatchery goals should be developed and understood in the context of regional, national and international frameworks like the Magnuson-Stevens Act, US/Canada and the Joint Salmon Management process.

The next topic of discussion was Stock Status. Bill Freymond went over another document prepared jointly by the state and the tribes. Anne Marshall supplemented the document with recent genetic sampling information. This information indicates that Dungeness and Elwha stocks are a transition between Puget Sound and coastal stocks. They share rare alleles. Scott Chitwood added that there are changes in return timing between the stocks in each basin. In response to a question from Lee Blankenship, Don Rapelje explained that WDFW has not yet determined what to do if the Dungeness chinook captive broodstock program fails. They are trying to have the minimum genetic impact on the stock.

The third topic was Habitat: Current and Future. Jim Waldo reiterated that the Scientific Group is not charged with making recommendations on habitat, but needs an overview of habitat conditions and expectations, in order to make informed judgements about hatchery programs. The Scientific Group felt it had received a good overview of current conditions from the briefing book materials and the field tours, but could use more information about plans for the future. Ann Seiter said that Jimmycomelately Creek is one spot where the regional managers expect a

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significant improvement in habitat. If fully implemented, the Dungeness and Elwha restoration plans would of course have a major effect on habitat as well.

The Scientific Group and the regional participants agreed that the region should have a hatchery system capable of assisting with wild salmon recovery when habitat improvements are successful. Hatcheries should maintain certain stocks where the expectation is that the habitat will recover. Hatcheries can also replace important stocks that have been extirpated.

The final topic for the day was Hatchery Programs. Several regional participants provided overviews based on the documents they created for this section of the briefing book. Larry Ward introduced the Lower Elwha Hatchery and said that Scientific Group feedback on the Elwha Restoration Plan and Strait-Wide restoration plan would be appreciated. Don Rapelje introduced the Elwha Rearing Channel, Hurd Creek Hatchery, and Dungeness Hatchery. He asked for Scientific Group feedback on several specific programmatic elements and described several hatchery physical improvements that could improve the productivity of these facilities.

Because most of the regional hatchery programs are focused on maintaining stocks until habitat is recovered, rather than harvest, the regional participants agreed that a key issue on which the Scientific Group could provide assistance might be how to have a long term stock preservation program that doesn't adversely affect the population. The Scientific Group decided that it will need to comment on species interactions and cumulative effects in its report.

On May 18, the Scientific Group reviewed what they had read, seen and heard about the region to date, to identify information gaps and to make assignments for the next meeting. The group decided to reformat the regional information provided in the briefing book, in order to create a draft regional review report. This report could be presented to the regions to follow, as a template for how to respond to the Scientific Group's instruction sheet. The group identified a number of areas where additional information is needed to complete the draft report and made assignments for collecting that information.

The Scientific Group decided to hold a conference call within a few weeks to finalize the draft Operational Guidelines. In addition, a task team will visit the hatchery facilities in the Eastern Straits between the May and June meetings to review the Operational Guidelines with the hatchery managers. These visits will also help the Scientific Group gather some of the additional information needed for the report. The Scientific Group decided that training workshops might be necessary to properly introduce the monitoring criteria to hatchery personnel. There will be no effective adaptive management without monitoring.

The Scientific Group discussed and reached decisions on a few final details from its 2001 research grant program. The group concluded the May meeting by drafting a preliminary agenda for the June meeting and by tabling discussion of a 2002 work plan until a later meeting.