

MEETING SUMMARY

Hatchery Scientific Review Group November 15–17, 2004, Courtyard by Marriott, SeaTac

Agenda: The purpose of this meeting was to receive an update on co-manager decision-making meetings and key regional issues; discuss criteria for managing hatchery programs for success and accountability; meet with the Elwha Restoration Team; make progress on several scientific publications; discuss hatchery-related research; and receive updates on a number of hatchery reform-related topics.

In Attendance:

1. HSRG members John Barr (vice chair), Lee Blankenship (vice chair, November 16 and 17), Don Campton, Trevor Evelyn (November 16 and 17), Connie Mahnken, Lars Mobrand (chair), Lisa Seeb (November 15 and 17), Paul Seidel (November 15 and 17) and Bill Smoker (November 15 and 16); and alternate Tom Flagg.
2. Facilitation team members Barbara Cairns (November 15), Betsy Daniels (November 15), Michael Kern, Bj Mirk (November 15 and 17) and Michael Schmidt.
3. Brian Beckman, Pat Crain, Robert Elofson, Manuel Fariñas, Bill Freymond, Doug Morrill, Roger Peterson, Tim Tynan, Larry Ward, Brian Winter and Gary Wynans of the Elwha Restoration Team joined the HSRG on November 15 to discuss the draft Elwha Restoration Plan.

Discussions/Presentations:

On November 15, Bj Mirk welcomed the HSRG to the meeting. Michael Kern reviewed the agenda and meeting materials. Barbara Cairns provided a Hatchery Reform Project facilitation and communications update. Barbara said the facilitation team continues to work with the co-managers to help them operationalize hatchery reform. Most recently, the facilitation team assisted the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC) in hosting a hatchery strategic planning meeting for its member tribes.

Betsy Daniels said the facilitation team will also help the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and NWIFC complete a questionnaire for the co-managers to use in preparing information for several salmon recovery and planning processes, including Endangered Species Act (ESA) recovery plans, a hatchery environmental impact statement (EIS), and the HSRG's annual report to Congress. In addition, some regional co-managers have requested to meet with the full HSRG and/or a subgroup to seek clarification and/or technical assistance on certain regional implementation issues.

Several HSRG members reported on a November 8 presentation to NOAA Fisheries personnel in Portland on the HSRG's conclusions, principles and tools. The meeting was well-attended, well-received and resulted in a request for further conversation on specific case studies and the applicability of the HSRG's findings beyond the Puget Sound and coastal Washington system.

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The HSRG then welcomed members of the Elwha Restoration Team (ERT) to the meeting, to discuss the HSRG's recent letter responding to the ERT's request for a review of the draft Elwha Restoration Plan. The HSRG's review, and the discussion at this meeting, was organized around ensuring the plan reflects the HSRG's three principles of managing based on: 1) clear goals for each stock, 2) scientific defensibility, and 3) informed decision-making.

The HSRG and facilitation team ended the day with a preliminary conversation on the 2005 work plan for the Hatchery Reform Project. The HSRG asked a task team to convene, once Congress passes a FY 2005 appropriation bill, to draft a proposed 2005 Hatchery Reform Project work plan and budget for the HSRG and Hatchery Reform Coordinating Committee to consider at their December meetings. The HSRG agreed that the target audiences for the hatchery reform message in 2005 should be: 1) the scientific community, 2) hatchery operators, 3) fish management decision-makers, 4) elected officials, 5) environmental and fishing groups, and 6) the public. Based on these audiences and the work proposed in the 2005 request to Congress, the HSRG and facilitation team agreed on the following 2005 work plan themes: 1) co-management, 2) science, and 3) communications. A hatchery reform conference in fall 2005 will be a focus of the work plan.

On November 16, the HSRG spent most of the day reviewing and revising a matrix created by Connie Mahnken and Lars Mobrand containing the control, response and external variables that need to be monitored and evaluated in order to manage for success and accountability at hatcheries. Connie and Lars agreed to use the input provided to create a draft technical paper on this topic, for review by the HSRG at the December meeting. Once this technical paper is complete and made available to the co-managers, the HSRG intends to turn it into a peer-reviewed, scientific publication.

At the end of the day, the HSRG discussed a draft Columbia Basin Research Plan, on which the Northwest Power and Conservation Council is inviting comment. The HSRG decided to not comment as a group, given the tight timeframe and the group's busy schedule. However, some individual members may comment, formally or informally, as part of their non-HSRG activities.

The HSRG devoted most of November 17 to discussing a series of scientific publications and technical discussion papers it intends to submit for publication in the coming months, to ensure a clear understanding of its findings within the scientific community, and among decision-makers and the general public. The HSRG completed a manuscript for submission to Fisheries magazine that provides an overview of the Hatchery Reform Project and several key emerging issues identified by the HSRG. This will be the third overview piece on the project and the HSRG published in the scientific literature.

The next priority is to submit a scientific publication about the integrated/segregated hatchery program concept. Concurrent with that, the HSRG will submit a companion publication about how the integrated/segregated concept can be applied to management, via its fitness implications. Because there will be a several month delay between submission and publication, the HSRG will make these draft papers available electronically from www.hatcheryreform.org, once they are submitted.

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Another document under development will provide guidance on when to start a conservation hatchery program. The HSRG hopes to complete a technical paper on this topic at the December meeting, for distribution to co-managers who have requested guidance on this topic. The HSRG will then turn it into a manuscript for scientific publication. Other topics being developed include managing for success at hatcheries, the wild fish template, outplanting/net pen programs, and wild salmonid management zones.

Toward the end of the day, the HSRG discussed hatchery-related research. The group decided that a top priority in 2005 will be to develop an agenda to guide hatchery research. That agenda should focus on addressing data gaps, resolving uncertainties and identifying and testing the new working hypotheses for hatcheries of the future that have arisen from the Hatchery Reform Project. The agenda should also be tied to the HSRG's scientific framework, operational guidelines and criteria for managing hatcheries for success and accountability. The agenda will support moving from the industrial/factory view of hatcheries to an organic/biological view. The HSRG will also examine the projects currently funded under its research grant program, to determine if it is time for some or all of them to seek other sources of funding.

The HSRG ended the meeting by setting aside the following dates for potential meetings in the first part of 2005 (locations TBD): January 18–20, February 22–24 (may include a research review), March 14–16.