



State of Washington
Governor's
Salmon Recovery
Office

2002 State of Salmon

Part One

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Cover Photos Left to Right

Flett Creek / Salmon Recovery Funding Board
Pink male salmon / Manu Esteve
Stream restoration / Salmon Recovery Funding Board
Fisherman / Washington State Archives
Volunteers stream sampling / Dick Knight, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group
Stream bank restoration / Salmon Recovery Funding Board

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Preface

Legislation passed in 1998 (RCW 75.85.020) requires the governor to submit a biennial state of the salmon report to the legislature. The report is to summarize progress on activities intended to benefit salmon and to provide recommendations on steps to further the success of salmon recovery. In December 2000 the first State of Salmon Report was issued; this is the second State of Salmon Report.

The 2002 State of Salmon Report contains four parts: This is Part One; Part Two is the Staff Summary Report; Part Three contains detailed Data Reports; and Part Four is the Biennial Report from the Salmon Recovery Funding Board and Lead Entity Report.

This document provides an overview of our state's salmon recovery efforts. We summarize what has been accomplished over the last five years, in particular focusing on what has been achieved since the 2000 State of Salmon Report. In the last section of this part, we provide recommendations based on our experiences and our monitoring about where we think salmon recovery efforts should be directed over the next two years. The remaining parts of the 2002 State of Salmon Report give more detailed information about individual components of the state's salmon recovery activities.

Background

¹ For the purposes of this report, the term “salmon” will be used to refer to all species of salmon, steelhead, trout, and char native to Washington State.

² A watershed is the area of land that water flows across or under on its way to a river, lake, or ocean.

Seventy-five percent of Washington State is affected by fifteen listings of salmon¹ as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

These listings are troubling for several reasons. Salmon continue to be an integral part of Washington’s history, culture, economy and recreational enjoyment. Fishing supports businesses and provides jobs and recreational experiences for a significant number of Washington citizens. For example, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) reports the value of recreational fishing in Washington to be \$1 billion in spending, while commercial fishing generates \$289.2 million in economic benefits. Salmon are also valued for subsistence, for nutritional health, and for the spiritual well being of tribal people. The decline of salmon also tells us that the overall health of our watersheds,² including water quality and species diversity, is declining. Healthy wild fish populations provide the genetic diversity that is the basis for long-term viability of salmon. And, under ESA listings, the federal government or other parties through lawsuits can initiate selected actions that although beneficial to salmon, may adversely impact business activities, water and local land use, fishing, and agriculture.

The reasons for ESA listings are numerous. Declines of wild salmon closely parallel settlement and development of the Pacific Northwest over the last century. Rivers, streams, and habitat have been degraded over time by human activities; over fishing and hatchery fish have played a role in the decline; and dams have blocked fish habitat and impeded migration. These factors under human control that influence the health of our salmon are commonly referred to as the “four Hs”—habitat, harvest, hatcheries, and hydropower. While we recognize and must account for variable ocean conditions in producing healthy fish populations, we cannot influence them so the “four Hs” are our areas of focus for a statewide program to protect and restore salmon and watershed health.

The life cycle of salmon is generally three to five years, and it will take several salmon generations to know if we are doing the right thing with enduring results. This will require a long-term, sustained effort by state government, working in partnership with tribal governments, local and federal governments, private citizens, and organizations working at the watershed level. Even with the lack of long-term data on the response of salmon to our efforts, there are still a number of ways—covered in this report—to demonstrate our approach is “on course” and has a strong likelihood of success.

The National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service share responsibility for administration of the ESA, and it is these agencies that will adopt final recovery plans for salmon and steelhead. But, the state has a vital role and this report describes the state’s response to salmon ESA listings and other activities to recover salmon. It also contains recommendations that move beyond the confines of this federal law in three fundamental ways:

► First, the state of salmon can be and should be equated with the state of our watersheds. Our concern should not be only listed fish, but rather the broader issue of overall watershed health. While we are investing a great deal of public funding and citizen support for salmon, we must look at water supply, water quality, and fish and wildlife habitat issues from a watershed perspective. We should be expanding and integrating the state’s salmon and watershed efforts into one comprehensive program that improves all aspects of watershed health.

► Second, the ESA is a management tool of last resort. When a species is listed it means we have failed to manage our natural environment properly. The formal requirements of the ESA can often have significant economic impacts on citizens, business, the forest industry, and agriculture. By focusing on the broader objective of watershed health, we may be able to initiate more preventive management approaches that can

keep additional species from being listed under the ESA. This is, for example, a goal of the Puget Sound Shared Strategy effort, federal Habitat Conservation Plans, the Forests and Fish Agreement, and the Northwest Power Planning Council's (Power Council's) Fish and Wildlife Program. This should be the focus of state programs and efforts as well. Watershed health and preventive management, not ESA response, should be the hallmarks of the state's natural resource programs.

► Third, we must continue the momentum established by the legislature to support community-based watershed and regional efforts. People at local levels know their watersheds and they are invested in making improvements for the future of these areas. This is where partnerships and consensus are forged among local governments, citizen groups, tribal governments, agriculture, and business. And, this is where we look at environmental and economic issues together to define what sustainability really means. The energy and focus for state agencies should be in supporting local and regional watershed organizations.

State Legislation

In 1998, the legislature passed and Governor Locke signed, ESHB 2496 - an act relating to salmon recovery. In passing this Salmon Recovery Act, the legislature declared that the state should "retain primary responsibility for managing the natural resources of the state, rather than to abdicate those responsibilities to the federal government." This law set up a voluntary and locally-based salmon habitat restoration process, led by lead entities consisting of counties, cities, and tribal governments. The function of these entities is to develop a list of projects that help restore and protect habitat for fish within a Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) or combinations of WRIs. The act also created our state's Independent Science Panel to "help ensure that sound science is used in salmon recovery efforts."

In 1999, the legislature passed and Governor Locke signed 2ESSB 5595 to promote public oversight of funding for salmon recovery projects and to provide a coordinated state funding process. This law established a ten-member board consisting of five voting citizens and five non-voting state agency directors. The function of the board is to make grants and loans for salmon habitat projects and salmon recovery activities from the amounts appropriated to the board for this purpose. Governor Locke appointed members of the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) later that year.

Although not in direct response to the ESA listings, the 1998 legislature passed and the Governor Locke signed ESHB 2514, the Watershed Planning Act, which substantially amended the state's watershed planning statute. This law provided for the establishment of local government-sponsored planning units in each WRIA or combination of WRIs for the purpose of assessing the status of water resources in a WRIA or multi-WRIA area, and to determine how best to manage these resources in balance with competing resource demands as expressed in watershed plans. ESHB 2514 contained provisions that are related to the state's fish recovery efforts. Specifically, this statute also provided the option for each planning unit to voluntarily include instream flow, water quality, and habitat as components of their respective watershed plans.

And, in 2001, the legislature passed and Governor Locke signed SSB 5637, an act relating to monitoring of watershed health and salmon recovery. This law requires a Monitoring Oversight Committee to develop a comprehensive statewide strategy for monitoring watershed health, with a focus on salmon recovery. Their report is due in December 2002.

State Salmon Recovery Strategy

The 1998 Salmon Recovery Act also established a Salmon Recovery Office within the Office of the Governor to coordinate and assist in the development of regional salmon recovery plans. This office, through the leadership of the Governor's Special Assistant on Natural Resources, Curt Smitch, initiated efforts to coordinate state activity on behalf of salmon recovery. This was done largely through the work of the Governor's Joint Natural Resources Cabinet (JNRC). The JNRC developed and published the comprehensive *Statewide Strategy to Recover Salmon: Extinction is Not an Option* in September 1999. The Statewide Strategy provided a framework for the state's response to the ESA listings, providing goals and strategies for each of the four Hs necessary to recover salmon and outlining specific measures that needed to be taken. It includes, for example, looking at land use issues and the continued evaluation of growth management plans, critical areas ordinances and shorelines programs in relation to salmon recovery efforts. It also laid the foundation for a comprehensive program addressing watershed health using salmon as focus species.

The *Statewide Strategy* called for development of regional and local salmon recovery plans as the vehicles to accomplish its goals and to make salmon recovery a reality. In consultation with the WDFW, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and others, the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) identified seven salmon recovery regions in the state. Organizations have now formed in most of these regions for the purpose of developing recovery plans. Clear, scientifically based recovery goals are pre-requisites for reliable recovery planning, and Technical Recovery Teams have been established by NMFS to develop technical information and to work with regional organizations to help identify the goals.

Columbia Basin

The Columbia River flows through five of the state's salmon recovery regions and holds 12 of the state's 15 ESA listings. In response to the ESA, the federal government called for expanded efforts in the Columbia River's tributaries to offset impacts on listed fish by the federal hydroelectric projects. This "off-site mitigation" program is increasingly linked with the regional salmon recovery organizations established through the *Statewide Strategy*. Many efforts are now underway to coordinate projects funded by the Power Council and SRFB.

A major component of the Power Council's effort is development of sub-basin plans, which will be done in the 11 ecological provinces and 62 sub-basins the Power Council has identified in the Columbia Basin. Seven of these provinces are in Washington and are aligned with the regional boundaries established by the GSRO. For the 2001-2006 period, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has allocated \$186 million annually to implement the Power Council's fish and wildlife program in the four-state area. Projects identified in sub-basin plans and integrated with the State's Salmon Recovery Regions will receive priority funding.

The Columbia River estuary (estuary) plays a critically important role in providing for the recovery of Columbia River salmon. Since 1989, the states of Washington and Oregon have worked in close collaboration with local governments, tribes, federal agencies, and citizens on water quality and habitat-related activities in the estuary. In 1996, the estuary was accepted into the National Estuary Program (NEP), run under the auspices of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). Governor Locke and Governor Kitzhaber of Oregon in late 2000 requested that the regional organization running the NEP, the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, form an Executive Committee to integrate the effort with the other activities addressing impacts at hydroelectric projects. An ESA Executive Committee has been formed for this purpose.

Summary of Achievements

MAJOR PROGRAMMATIC INITIATIVES

Fisheries Harvest. Agreements negotiated in 1999 under the United States-Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty have resulted in reduction of the Canadians' catch of chinook and coho whose home streams are in Washington, and a 30% increase in the number of Puget Sound chinook that return to Washington's streams.

Hatchery Management. With over 100 facilities, Washington has one of the largest hatchery systems in the world. Guidelines consistent with the recovery of wild salmon have been developed for operation of these hatcheries, and a major scientifically based redesign of hatcheries to help recover and conserve naturally spawning fish populations has been underway since 2000. After decades of piecemeal reform efforts, the funding, independent science, and strong leadership needed to reform hatchery programs regionally and system-wide is in place.

Forests and Fish Agreement. This voluntary agreement among the state, NMFS, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and private industrial forestland owners covers eight million acres of private forestland and protects 60,000 miles of streams for fish. Small forestland owners, local government, the US EPA, and some tribes were also participants in the final agreement that was adopted into law in 1999 by the legislature, and was the basis for new Forest Practices Rules that went into effect in July 2001. This is the first agreement of its kind in the country.

Water Policy. In 2001, Governor Locke launched a four-year statewide Water Action Strategy designed to improve the way water is managed in Washington, and the legislature passed a landmark bill resulting in comprehensive changes in the state's water law. Among other provisions, the bill made setting instream flows for fish a priority for watershed plans and appropriated new funding for this purpose. The legislature added new funding to acquire water to benefit fish and to fund metering devices in specific critical basins that are important to

salmon. In 2002, the legislature directed an accelerated adoption process for in-stream flows in four high priority basins.

Limiting Factors Identification. At the direction of the legislature in 1998, the Conservation Commission has completed reports on habitat factors that limit wild fish production in 37 of the state's 62 WRIAs; all watersheds with salmon (but not all those with bull trout) will have a completed report by June 2003. These reports provide important baseline information for local groups setting priorities for habitat projects.

Shorelines Regulations. The state Shorelines Hearings Board invalidated shoreline management guidelines adopted by the Department of Ecology (Ecology); these guidelines were designed to protect 20,000 miles of shorelines and, in part, fish habitat. Negotiations to develop an agreement on new guidelines were successfully concluded in December 2002.

Regional Road Maintenance ESA Guidelines. Originally developed by the Tri-County Coalition, the Regional Road Maintenance ESA Program was expanded to cover the entire state. The *Guidelines* provide a set of road maintenance policies and practices that will meet the dual goals of contributing to conservation of species protected under ESA while also meeting critical roadway safety and maintenance needs. More than two-dozen counties and cities and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) have formally applied to NMFS for inclusion in the program.

Agriculture, Fish and Water (AFW). Negotiations continue with the agriculture community on compliance with the ESA. Negotiations have been successful in developing guidelines for irrigation district management plans and a pesticides registration review process that address fish protection. The state is implementing pilot irrigation district plans in the Dungeness, Nooksack, and Walla Walla watersheds. These plans are a pioneering effort to provide guidance to irrigation districts and water purveyors or users for developing management plans that will simultaneously meet requirements of ESA and the Clean Water Act (CWA). This process uses a voluntary, incentive-based approach.

Sub-basin Planning. The Power Council developed a fish and wildlife program that will address fish and wildlife needs, with a particular focus on ESA-listed fish species, through a sub-basin planning process. Having 27 of the 62 sub-basins, Washington is participating fully in the Power Council's program.

Puget Sound Nearshore Project. This project is a cooperative effort among the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; state, other federal, and tribal governments; industries; and environmental organizations. Its goal is to preserve and restore the health of the Sound's marine and estuarine shoreline by identifying significant ecological problems, evaluating potential solutions, and implementing projects that will restore and preserve this critical habitat. It is one of the largest habitat restoration and preservation endeavors ever undertaken in the United States.

ORGANIZATIONAL

LOCAL WATERSHEDS. Twenty-six Lead Entities have formed under the Salmon Recovery Act, covering 45 of the state's 62 WRIAs. Thirty-one watershed planning units under the Watershed Planning Act have formed in 41 of the state's 62 WRIAs. In 32 WRIAs, lead entities and planning units formally work together.

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. Regional salmon recovery organizations have been or are being formed in five of the seven regions. These are:

► **Puget Sound:** The Puget Sound Shared Strategy is a voluntary and collaborative effort to produce a recovery plan addressing 22 individual chinook populations, bull trout, and Hood Canal chum. The regional recovery effort is overseen and managed by a non-profit organization called the Puget Sound Salmon Forum. A draft recovery plan for ESA-listed species is expected by summer 2005.

► **Lower Columbia River:** At the request of a coalition of interests from Washington's five southwest counties, the 1998 legislature created a pilot program for steelhead recovery in Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis, Skamania, and Wahkiakum counties. This program now is addressing all ESA-listed salmon (bull trout, chinook, chum, steelhead) and is being carried out by the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board. A draft regional plan that addresses ESA-listed fish is due to the Power Council by summer 2004; this plan will be integrated with the recovery plan under development.

► **Upper Columbia River:** A coordinating forum for integrating the multiple processes that will develop a salmon recovery plan was formed with members representing three counties, two tribes, public utilities districts, citizens, and others. Draft regional fish and wildlife plans that address ESA-listed fish are due to the Power Council by summer 2004.

► **Snake River:** Formation of a Regional Recovery Board is currently underway. Cities, counties, tribes, local citizens, and others will be members. The findings and products of sub-basin planning efforts under the Power Council will be used to draft regional fish and wildlife plans that address ESA-listed fish by summer 2004.

► **Middle Columbia River:** The Yakima River Lead Entity is exploring creation of a regional recovery board that would include counties, cities, and the Yakama Nation. To be eligible for Power Council funding, draft regional fish and wildlife plans that address ESA-listed fish would be due to the Power Council by summer 2004.

► **Washington Coastal:** There are no plans at this time for a region-wide recovery organization; however, two Watershed Planning Units do exist for three WRIAs and four Lead Entities address issues for the five WRIAs in the region.

► **Northeast Washington:** No formal recovery organization exists, but stakeholders in the region have formed a regional Advisory Council and Oversight Committee for the purpose of implementing sub-basin planning. A draft regional fish and wildlife plan that addresses ESA-listed fish is due to the Power Council by summer 2004.

FUNDING (2001-2003) FOR SALMON RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

Current activities in state government highlighted in the *Statewide Strategy* have an important relationship to salmon. In addition to habitat protection and restoration, these activities involve forest, water, pesticides, hatchery, and harvest management. These programs have undergone changes in the way they operate in response to ESA. Information provided in this section summarizes this broad array of programs that, together, make important contributions to recovery of salmon in Washington.

The 2001-03 biennial budget for the State of Washington includes \$266 million (\$182M 01-03 appropriations, \$84M carry forward from 99-01 biennium) in salmon-related expenditures for new activities, or changes to existing activities necessary to recover salmon or to meet the requirements of the ESA. The budget is predicated upon \$84.7 million in federal funding for the two-year period, and includes appropriations for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2002 and 2003. Major components included in the state's 2001-2003 biennium are listed below. The remaining funds are supporting smaller projects and activities such as a special hydraulics project approval advisory group, stormwater manual development, critical area ordinance updates, and others.

Salmon Recovery Funding Board Grants

\$68.9 million (\$26.3 M State Bonds, \$42.6 M Federal)

The SRFB provides grants to local governments, tribes, nonprofit organizations, and state agencies for salmon habitat restoration, acquisition, and assessments.

The 2001-03 biennial budget assumes \$42.6 (\$24.0M for FFY 2002 year and \$18.6M for FFY 2003, less administrative overhead) from the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery program, administered by the NMFS. A match of \$26.3M is assumed in the state budget.

Results: As of October 2002, the SRFB has provided grants for 517 projects with a value of \$96.4M. Project sponsors estimate 355 miles of streams were opened by removing blockages to fish passage. Over 3700 acres of habitat important to salmon were purchased. (More recent information is contained in the biennial report of the SRFB, found in Part Four of the 2002 State of Salmon Report.)

Forests and Fish Implementation

\$20.9 million (\$12.7 M State, \$8.2 M Federal)

The 2001-03 biennial budget includes \$20.9 million in state and federal funds to implement the Forests and Fish rules. The state budget assumes that a minimum of \$4 million a year in federal funds will be provided for FFY 2002 and FFY 2003 through the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery program in the NMFS budget. This is the same level as provided in FFY 2000 and FFY 2001. This funding would continue to be passed through the SRFB to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

State agencies managing forestlands also need to inventory and modify forest roads to protect salmon. The 2001-2003 state budget includes \$4.9 million for the DNR, WDFW, and the State Parks and Recreation Commission to begin meeting these requirements. WDFW assumes \$200,000 of this amount in federal funding from BPA to help meet their obligations.

Results: More than 4700 Road Maintenance and Abandonment Plans have been filed. Since 2000, more than 400 culverts blocking fish passage have been repaired, opening more than 250 miles of fish habitat. Fifty directed research projects are underway to provide a scientific foundation for future modifications to forest practices regulations. Protective buffers along over 60,000 miles of waters in Washington were expanded from 50 feet to 75-175 feet.

Hatchery Reform

\$23.7 million (\$9.3 M State, \$13.9 M Federal, \$0.5 M Local)

Washington State, federal agencies, and Washington treaty tribes operate one of the largest systems of hatcheries in the world. The NMFS 4(d) rule requires all hatcheries to develop and implement Hatchery Genetic Management Plans (HGMPs) to ensure that these facilities do not harm salmon listed under the ESA. In FFY 2000, Congress provided \$3.8 million through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the Washington Hatchery Improvement Project to conduct scientific research, and to redesign hatcheries to meet ESA requirements.

The 2001-03 biennial budget assumes \$5 million for FFY 2001, and \$5.6 million for both FFY 2002 and FFY 2003 for continuation of the Washington Hatchery Improvement program. The Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, which also supports the SRFB grant process, would continue to administer this funding.

The budget for the WDFW includes \$9.8 million in state and local funds to redesign and improve state hatcheries. It also assumes \$2.7 million in federal funding through the BPA for reforms at Mitchell Act hatcheries.

Results: 128 HGMPs were developed and submitted to the NMFS for approval. Program management recommendations from the federally-mandated Hatchery Scientific Review Group are beginning implementation; these range from hatchery closures, to terminating hatchery programs at some facilities, to improving water quality, rearing, and predator control to increase success of chinook conservation programs.

Water Strategy

\$24.1 million (\$6 M Federal, \$18.1 M State)

Washington's Water Action Strategy is designed to improve the way water is managed in the state. Elements of the strategy include sponsoring legislation to fix the out-dated water code, taking administrative actions where appropriate to improve instream flows, developing comprehensive watershed plans and regional water management programs, and securing adequate funding to implement needed actions. A total of \$5.2 million is dedicated to setting instream flows, \$6.5 million is budgeted for water rights acquisitions, \$1.6 million is for enhanced stream gauging in five critical basins important to salmon, and \$3.4 million will fund purchase and installation of water use meters. Other expenditures include water conservation projects and regional and local management initiatives.

Results: Almost 35,000 acre feet of water was put back in streams during times of the year important for fish; for example, in the Dungeness River watershed, the state leased sufficient water to maintain 50% of the normal stream flow in the river for fish. Stream gauging was enhanced in eight watersheds. The first major instream flow rule in 15 years was adopted, protecting flows on the Skagit River.

Economic Transition Funds

2001-2003 biennium: \$ 6.7 million (\$ 1.3 M State, \$5.4 M federal)

Total 1999-2002 program: \$34.04 million (\$4.04 M State, \$30 M Federal)

The 1999 Pacific Salmon Treaty called for a year-by-year reduction in the percent of Fraser River sockeye runs that can be taken within U.S. fisheries. This reduction in catch had a large impact on U.S. commercial fishers, so to assist in the transition out of this fishery, congress and the state legislature provided an economic transition package that required a permanent reduction of commercial salmon fishing licenses.

Results: 769 total commercial fishing licenses have been retired since 1999, of which 669 are a direct result of the 1999 Pacific Salmon Treaty.

Fish Passage Barriers and Screens

\$16.2 million (\$6.7 M State, \$8.3 M Federal, \$1.2 M Local)

Inadequate fish passage and improper screens on irrigation diversions are significant factors limiting recovery of salmon. Not only are smolts inadvertently sucked into irrigation pumps, but spawning adults lack access to important habitat.

The 2001-03 biennial budget includes \$16.2 million to correct fish passage barriers and screens. This includes \$6.7 million in state funds, \$4.3 million of federal funding from BPA, \$550,000 from the USFWS Dingel-Johnson allocation, and \$3.5 million anticipated under *PL 106-502 The Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act of 2000* for the WDFW to correct blockages and screens at its facilities. The budget also includes state funding for the WSDOT to correct fish passage barriers. Fish passage barriers will also be corrected as state agencies begin updating forest roads to meet the requirements of the Forests and Fish agreement on state lands.

Results: 67 fish screening and 236 fish passage projects have been completed since the programs began in 1992. During the 1999-2001 biennium, these projects opened up over 200 miles of fish habitat.

Pesticide Strategy

\$1.3 million (\$1.0 M State, \$0.3 M Local)

The state is developing a comprehensive strategy for assessing pesticide impacts on threatened and endangered salmon in Washington State. This strategy is being developed by the Washington State Department of Agriculture in conjunction with the NMFS NW Region, USFWS Western Washington Office, US EPA Region 10, U.S. Geological Survey, Washington State University, and Ecology, DNR, and WDFW. The strategy will use surface water monitoring to determine salmon exposure to pesticides, evaluate the impact of exposure at various life stages, and then propose appropriate mitigation actions. In addition to the \$1.1 million in state funds, \$245,000 in additional federal funding per year is requested to expand the surface water monitoring program in Washington State. This funding will allow expanded monitoring in basins representing the various cropping patterns in the state and which provide critical habitat for salmon.

Results: A negotiated agreement with NMFS, USFWS, and US EPA was signed that will lead to consistency with ESA and CWA. The program is presently being implemented.

Recommendations

The first five years of the state salmon recovery program were focused in two areas: setting up the institutional capability to initiate and support salmon recovery efforts at the local, regional, and state levels; and addressing immediate restoration needs through projects. Correcting immediate high priority problems in harvest, hatcheries, and habitat, will continue, but the focus now will be on completing plans that tie all of our salmon recovery initiatives at local and regional scales and returning our salmon to healthy harvestable levels. Now more than ever we need to build on the citizen energy that has developed in our watersheds and give them the support they need to be successful. Given this perspective, the following recommendations are offered:

Development of draft recovery plans must be our priority

Recovery planning processes are well underway in Washington. A vital component of these recovery plans is goal setting—how many fish are necessary to ensure recovery? The *Statewide Strategy to Recover Salmon* calls for the seven regional organizations to develop draft recovery plans that achieve our state goal of healthy harvestable levels of salmon. In support of these planning efforts, federal agencies will provide interim estimates of recovery planning targets that will help groups doing recovery planning gauge the level of effort that may be for recovery.

Recommendation: The GSRO and state agencies, coordinating with the Power Council, should continue to make support for these regional planning efforts a priority. Staff should work to help integrate state and federal programs into these recovery plans. Draft recovery plans, coordinated by regional organizations, should be completed for NMFS review by the end of 2004 in several of these regions.

Recommendation: To facilitate development of draft recovery plans, the state will designate an individual to work with each salmon recovery region and to serve as the point of contact for all state agencies. We have asked the federal government also to designate a lead person to be the chief point of contact for the state and for each of the salmon recovery regions.

We must strengthen our commitment to community based watershed and regional efforts

Salmon recovery occurs at three levels: 1) statewide, 2) regional (or Evolutionarily Significant Unit—ESU—based), and 3) watershed (or WRIA-based).

Salmon Recovery Regions are organized around ESUs and Distinct Population Segments (DPSs), which are the units that federal agencies have used to delineate species under the ESA. The Salmon Recovery Regions increasingly will be the centerpiece of the state's efforts in the coming years. They will be responsible for coordinating development of draft recovery plans that address the “four Hs,” overseeing implementation of the plans over time, integrating federal processes such as work of Technical Recovery Teams (salmon) and Recovery Unit Teams (bull trout), and coordinating fish recovery planning efforts developed on a WRIA or multi-WRIA basis.

Watershed organizations are essential participants in this effort. The specific organizational vehicle at the WRIA level varies; there may be Lead Entities set up under the Salmon Recovery Act, Watershed Planning Units under the Watershed Planning Act, the Power Council's sub-basin planning process, Regional Fish Enhancement Groups, or smaller watershed councils, and other individual groups. These groups are the energy and enthusiasm that drive salmon recovery, and this commitment must be captured and nurtured by regional recovery

organizations. Much of the detailed planning and project development work occurs in these groups, and it is up to each region to decide how best to organize to ensure a sense of ownership in all participants. The diversity of unique approaches taken by each region is one of the strengths of our recovery strategy, as long as we understand regional organizations have a responsibility to eventually coordinate these processes and bind them in enduring recovery plans.

Recommendation: No immediate major changes are necessary to ESHB 2514 and ESHB 2496 to support development of draft regional recovery plans. Regional recovery organizations are expected to coordinate the activities and prioritize projects of those organizations that are receiving funding for salmon recovery within their regional boundaries as they contribute to development of a salmon recovery plan.

Recommendation: To assist in development of salmon recovery plans, the SRFB should support administrative staffing functions for regional and lead entity organizations.

Recommendation: A Council of Regions has been informally established for the purposes of sharing materials, strategies, processes, and products; participants are working together on common issues to develop creative solutions and experiment with their approaches. Regional leaders established such a Council through self-initiation; if regional organizations desire to pursue the option, the Council could be chartered by the legislature with statutory criteria specified about what constitutes a regional organization and incentives for establishing a formal regional organization.

Salmon and watershed health activities should be integrated

Increasingly, natural resource management and protection must involve a holistic approach, centered not just on salmon, but also rather on the broader notion of overall watershed health. Salmon and watersheds constitute unifying themes, as salmon are regarded as an indicator of overall watershed health, and there must be a synergy of effort with closer coordination among the state's natural resource management programs.

Recommendation: While the main focus must remain on development of salmon recovery plans, integration of salmon recovery and watershed activities needs to begin. This may include establishment of a salmon and watershed funding board (to supercede the SRFB and other related boards), implementation by the regional salmon recovery organizations of plans developed under the Watershed Planning Act, or other actions. The Council of Regions should prepare recommendations on the potential for integrating the state's salmon and watershed efforts for consideration by the legislature and Governor no later than January 2004.

Increased coordination of salmon recovery funding is necessary

Regional and WRIA-based groups need funds to support basic coordination and logistical functions associated with the development of fish recovery plans. Presently, these monies come from a variety of sources: the Power Council is providing funds at both the regional (provincial) and sub-basin level, the SRFB and state agencies are providing state and Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery funds for organi-

zation, assessment, and project work. In addition, the Power Council's fish and wildlife program will provide an ongoing funding program for activities that implement sub-basin plans.

Recommendation: The GSRO, SRFB and state agencies will work with federal agencies, other states, congressional and legislative staff, and the Council of Regions to examine state and federal monies used for salmon recovery. Recommendations for funding coordination and reporting should be reported to the Governor by June 15, 2003.

Recommendation: To ensure the most efficient use of all funding sources, the SRFB and Governor's Office will continue discussions with the Power Council seeking agreement regarding respective funding responsibilities and report back to the Governor by June 15, 2003.

Recommendation: To make better decisions about cost-effectiveness of salmon funding, the SRFB should work with the Power Council to develop an integrated mechanism for scientific review of proposed habitat projects in the Columbia Basin. Recommendations should be reported to the Governor by June 15, 2003.

Better accountability mechanisms are necessary to track our work and report our progress

We must continue to improve accountability for investments in salmon recovery. We must be able to show, in clear and straightforward terms, how public resources are being spent and demonstrate that they are being applied in the most effective ways possible. Better accountability is essential in three different areas: integration of monitoring efforts, reporting our indicators, and habitat project effectiveness.

► Integrated Monitoring

The Monitoring Oversight Committee's report of December 1, 2002 identifies many more actions than can be funded given budget constraints. Choices must be made. Information from monitoring must respond to what policy makers and appropriators need most to address salmon recovery and watershed health. Agencies must reprioritize existing agency monitoring efforts to meet these twin objectives.

Recommendation: A Monitoring Committee should be established, as recommended in the Monitoring Oversight Committee's report. This Committee will work with the Council of Regions, state and federal agencies, the SRFB, and others to ensure that data collected are relevant and accessible, to support the highest priority needs of appropriate state, federal, and local officials.

Recommendation: The recommendations in the Monitoring Oversight Committee's report should be considered in determining the most important monitoring and data needs.

Recommendation: Monitoring funded by the Power Council and in Washington's watersheds should be compatible with monitoring done by the state.

► Reporting Progress

Elected officials and the public need to have access to a simple set of indicators that are generally understood to say whether or not we are making progress toward salmon recovery. Progress has been made—as shown in this State of Salmon report—and we do have more detailed technical indicators in the Salmon Recovery Scorecard, but more work is needed on simple indicators to show whether or not progress is being made, for the benefit of policy makers and the public. These indicators must be regularly reported.

Recommendation: The GSRO, in conjunction with any monitoring committee, should evaluate and update existing statewide monitoring reporting; include watershed health as recommended in the Monitoring Oversight Committee's report; and subject to new statutory authority, develop the State of Watersheds and Salmon Report to supercede the State of Salmon Report.

► Effectiveness of Habitat Projects

The SRFB has established an accounting system for the expenditures of salmon recovery funds. The next step in a strong reporting and adaptive management process is to continue development of a clear and understandable method by which projects results can be measured and reported as they are implemented over time.

Recommendation: The SRFB, working with the GSRO, Monitoring Committee, Ecology, WDFW, and the Independent Science Panel, should develop a project effectiveness evaluation system by October 1, 2003. This should be integrated with the system established by the Power Council.

The role of independent science needs clarification and coordination

Independent scientific review provides decision makers with technical feedback and perspectives that do not reflect a particular vested interest or point of view. The Independent Science Panel was established under the Salmon Recovery Act of 1998; its purpose is to provide scientific review and oversight of the state's salmon recovery efforts and to review the adequacy of salmon recovery plans developed by the state. Other independent science bodies have been established and are operating in the Columbia River Basin; they were established under the

Northwest Power Planning Act to advise the Power Council on its fish and wildlife program, and to review projects proposed for funding. In all Washington salmon actions, it is crucial we ensure that we are expending our energies and monies on the most important activities and in the areas that will have the most benefit for salmon.

Recommendation: The GSRO will review the role of the Independent Science Panel to ensure their work is aligned with the most pressing needs facing the state and report to the Governor by April 15, 2003.

Recommendation: Upon request, the Independent Science Panel should advise the SRFB and Monitoring Committee on scientific concerns and approaches to issues of prioritization, and should continue to support development and implementation of the integrated monitoring program and the Board's habitat project effectiveness evaluation program (see Effectiveness of Habitat Projects).

Recommendation: The GSRO should work with the Power Council to develop an integrated mechanism for scientific review of plans in Washington.

