

Council of Salmon Recovery Regions Monitoring for Salmon Recovery

Request for Monitoring Forum Assistance

January 19, 2007

Purpose.

The regional salmon recovery organizations are requesting the assistance of the Governor's Forum on Monitoring in refining and implementing regional salmon and steelhead recovery plans.

Background.

Regional recovery organizations have been established to lead efforts to develop and coordinate implementation of salmon recovery plans. To date, NOAA Fisheries has approved recovery plans for the Lower Columbia and Puget Sound regions. Recovery plans for the Hood Canal, Upper Columbia, Snake, and Yakima regions are under final review and are expected to be approved in 2007.

As part of their work, the regional organizations are developing research, monitoring and evaluation plans. The purposes of these plans are to ensure a coordinated approach to:

- Measure and report progress toward achieving recovery as defined by NOAA Fisheries Viable Salmonid Population (VSP) and delisting criteria;
- Assess and report the effectiveness of specific recovery strategies, measures, and actions; and
- Provide the basis for informed decision-making by federal, state, tribal, and local governments over the course of recovery efforts.
- Ensure funding entities receive timely information about plan implementation

Although monitoring plans, like recovery plans, vary somewhat in their scope, approach, and scale due to local biological, physical, institutional, social, and cultural considerations, they generally all address or will address:

- Implementation monitoring of recovery plan actions;
- Project and program effectiveness; and
- Biological and habitat status and trends.

The regional monitoring plans are being developed through collaborative processes that involve an array of technical interests and data users. These may include federal and state agencies, tribes, local governments, academic institutions, Technical Recovery Teams (TRTs), scientists, and technical

consultants. Technical guidance and recommendations provided by variety of agencies and organizations such as NOAA, WDFW, and Ecology have also been used in developing the plans. All regional plans have used the guidance provided by the Governor's Forum on Monitoring.

To date, draft monitoring plans have been issued by the Puget Sound and Upper Columbia regional organizations. The second draft of the Lower Columbia monitoring plan will be issued in early February.

All regional organizations will be seeking to begin implementation of their monitoring plans within the next year. To a great extent, implementation of the plans will draw on existing monitoring whenever possible. Where gaps exist in meeting a region's monitoring needs, the organization will be working with their recovery partners (e.g., federal and state agencies, tribes, local governments, and non-profit organizations) to fund and implement additional monitoring efforts. In addition to collecting and interpreting data, the plans also address data management, access, and communications.

Recognizing the need to begin collecting key data as soon as possible, regional organizations supported the recommended monitoring budget package developed by the Governor's Forum on Monitoring. This package included increasing the level of salmon population monitoring and some high-level habitat status monitoring. In endorsing this package we stressed that, while it was a needed and timely initiative, it would not result in all regional data needs being met. We are concerned that the portion of the package dealing with high-level habitat indicators was not recommended for funding in the Governor's budget.

Request

We are seeking the assistance of the Governor's Forum on Monitoring as regional organizations continue to refine their monitoring plans and move toward implementation. Specifically, we are seeking assistance in the following areas:

- The identification of key high-level indicators, tied to de-listing, that should be monitored across all regions;
- Identification of monitoring protocols for these indicators and expected data and reporting;
- Securing the cooperation and assistance of state agencies in implementing the monitoring plans; and
- The development of a comprehensive state funding strategy for implementation of the monitoring plans.