

*Washington Forum on Monitoring*  
*September 11, 2009*

**AGENDA Item # 4**

**Adopt high-level indicators for Salmon**

**Presentation by:**

Ken Dzinbal

**Problem/Issue Statement**

The Forum is required to “*adopt general high-level indicators for salmon recovery and watershed health by December 1, 2009. By July 1, 2010 the forum shall also adopt the protocols for monitoring these high-level indicators...*”

The forum agreed on an initial set of proposed high-level indicators at its March meeting. Subsequently, we have coordinated with a number of other organizations also working on salmon indicators, including PNAMP (recommended high-level indicators), the Puget Sound Partnership indicators, NPCC (high-level indicators review process), CBFWA (State of the Resource Report), and NOAA (guidance for monitoring recovery of salmon and steelhead). The forum’s proposed salmon indicators are consistent with each of those other efforts. (Additional work is continuing on coordination and alignment of indicators for watershed health).

At the June 24<sup>th</sup> forum meeting, it was suggested that the forum move forward with approving the high-level indicators for salmon at its next meeting (this meeting).

**What decision is asked of the Forum?**

Formally adopt the proposed high-level indicators for salmon, and agree on a communications strategy to advertise the forum’s successful completion of this task.

# Washington Forum on Monitoring: High Level Indicators for Salmon

## Fish Abundance (salmon, steelhead, bull trout)

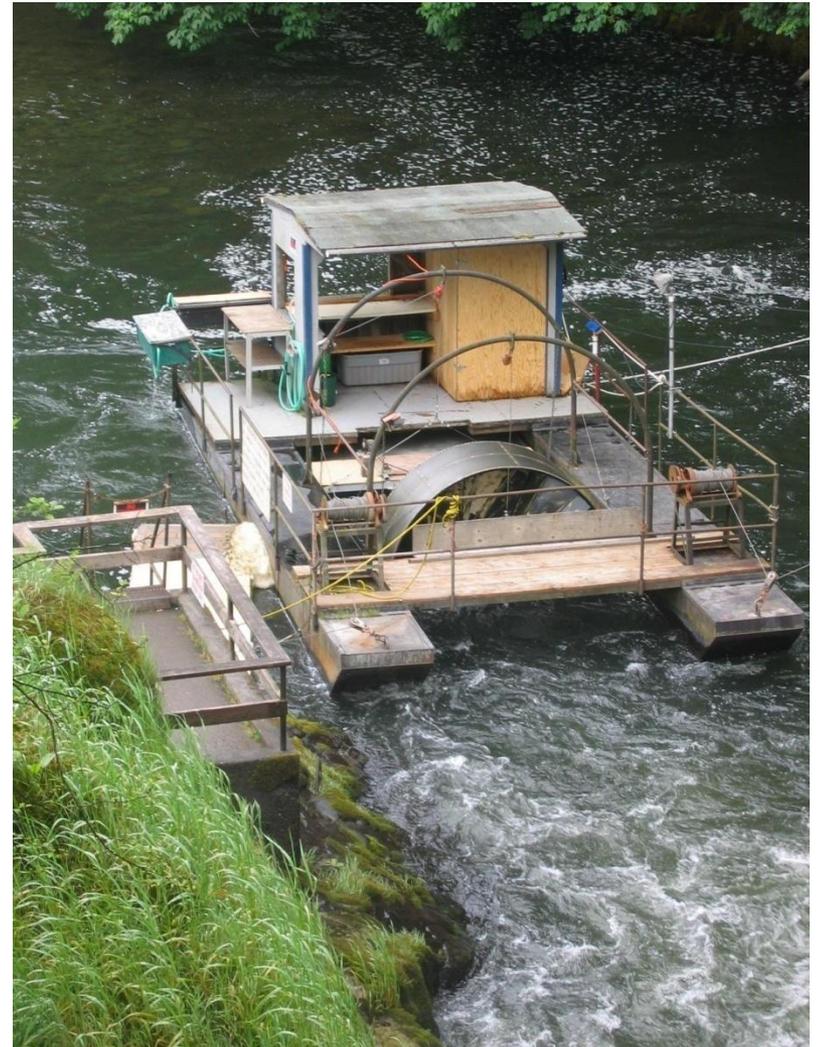
- Total adult spawners
- Total adults harvested
- Total juvenile out-migrants

For listed species by population  
(rolls up into MPG and ESU)

*Enumerated separately for wild  
fish and hatchery fish*

For all species by population  
(not currently compiled)

*Enumerated separately for wild  
fish and hatchery fish*



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## RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

August 28, 2009

Dr. Scott Rumsey, NMFS  
1201 NE Lloyd Boulevard, Suite 1100  
Portland, OR 97232

Re: "Draft Pacific Northwest Monitoring Guidance."

Dear Dr. Rumsey,

In 2007, the Washington State Legislature created the Washington Forum on Monitoring Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health (Forum), and adopted the "*Washington Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy and Action Plan for Watershed Health and Salmon Recovery*." The Forum currently comprises over 25 participating local, regional, state, tribal, and federal agencies and organizations involved in monitoring for salmon recovery or watershed health.

One of the Forum's primary responsibilities is to provide a multiagency venue to coordinate technical and policy issues and actions related to monitoring salmon recovery and watershed health (RCW 77.85.250). It is in light of that goal that we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on NOAA's Draft "*Guidance for Monitoring Recovery of Salmon and Steelhead Listed Under the Federal Endangered Species Act (Idaho, Oregon, and Washington)*" in response to the Federal Register Notice published on Monday, June 29, 2009 (Federal Register Vol 74, No. 123).

Our comments were compiled from a number of Forum members who have reviewed the guidance. It is important to note that our comments reflect a broad collection of views and therefore should not be interpreted to represent the position of any individual agency or member (some of whom may have elected not to comment on NOAA's guidance). In addition, our comments do not supersede those of any members who may also choose to independently provide their own detailed comments on the guidance. Our intention is simply to highlight several themes that have emerged through our review, with the hope that this will help strengthen the guidance.

### Forum comments on the Draft Guidance:

- 1) The Forum applauds NOAA's initiative in producing this guidance, and strongly supports the effort to identify the type and level of monitoring required to ascertain recovery, and to improve the consistency of monitoring across ESU's and DPS's. In general, the Draft Guidance is largely consistent with the state's Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy and therefore consistent with the Forum's overall priorities and strategy.

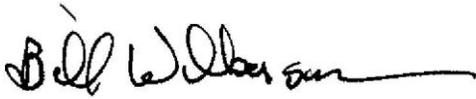
- 2) Delisting criteria – It is not clear how the recommendations and priorities in the guidance align with the ESA delisting criteria developed by Technical Recovery Teams and adopted in recovery plans approved by NOAA. For example, to achieve delisting, NOAA’s recovery criteria require information on VSP parameters for all populations within MPG’s. The guidance implies that less information is acceptable (e.g. Table 3 indicates that monitoring 75% of the populations in an MPG should provide sufficient data to evaluate recovery). Clarifying this apparent discrepancy would reduce potential confusion and strengthen the guidance.
- 3) Prioritization - NOAA has identified most of the monitoring requirements as either very high priority, or high priority, with few practical recommendations on how to make decisions or sequence actions when funding is inadequate to address all the priority needs. Additional guidance on what monitoring is most important to complete first (and why) would greatly strengthen the document.
- 4) VSP and Listing Factors - The guidance emphasizes monitoring for VSP parameters, while the monitoring guidance in regional recovery plans submitted to and approved by NOAA also emphasizes monitoring for listing factors. The guidance should clarify what level of monitoring will be needed to effectively assess whether threats leading to listings have been addressed sufficiently to warrant delisting.
- 5) The guidance indicates (page 52) that there is no current broad scale habitat evaluation system in place in the Pacific Northwest that can provide the status and trends data necessary to inform the public and meet federal ESA recovery purposes (besides ODFW and AREMP). Has NOAA evaluated the Ecology and WDFW approach to status and trends monitoring to determine if this meets the standard indicated?
- 6) There is little or no guidance on monitoring water quality or water quantity, even though these are fundamental concerns for salmon recovery and are important listing factors for many ESU’s and DPS’s.
- 7) There is little guidance on monitoring nearshore habitat for salmonid species.
- 8) There is relatively little guidance on monitoring regulatory protection.
- 9) NOAA’s role in implementing this guidance is not clear. NOAA has been engaged in monitoring efforts at least within the Puget Sound basin, and a partnership approach with other resource agencies across the state would be welcome.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on NOAA’s draft guidance. We believe the Guidance is an important step in efforts to improve the overall consistency and focus of monitoring for salmon recovery, and we appreciate NOAA’s efforts to develop

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this document. We hope our comments will help strengthen the draft and reduce potential confusion among monitoring entities, and help clarify priorities as we all struggle to meet our monitoring commitments with limited budgets.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Wilkerson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bill Wilkerson, Chair  
Washington Forum on Monitoring