



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE**  
Salmon Recovery Division  
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd. Suite 1100  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97232

April 27, 2009

Dr. Peter Paquet, Chair, Hatchery Scientific Review Group

Dear Dr. Paquet:

The Salmon Recovery Division (SRD) has received the HSRG's Reports, Reviews and Recommendations on Columbia River Hatcheries and joins with others in complimenting the HSRG on this extraordinary accomplishment. The SRD is the division within the NMFS Northwest Regional Office responsible for developing and implementing recovery plans, for conducting consultations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on hatchery programs and for administering the Mitchell Act.

SRD is now preparing to embark on the first hatchery consultations under the ESA since the HSRG Report was published. In this regard, we intend to give full consideration to the principles, analyses and recommendations developed by the HSRG and to use the analytical tools developed by the HSRG in our technical analyses of proposed hatchery actions.

SRD is also reviewing the Recovery Implementation Science Team (RIST) April 9<sup>th</sup> report on Hatchery Reform Science. The RIST was formed by NMFS in 2007 to coordinate scientific analyses in support of recovery plan implementation across the Pacific Northwest and is composed of NMFS and other scientists with broad expertise in order to

- 1) provide scientific information supporting recovery implementation decisions, and ensures that a regional perspective is maintained for that information;
  - 2) be responsible for communicating that information to NMFS offices within the region through the [Northwest Fisheries Science Center \(NWFSC\)](#), as well as potentially to regional recovery planning groups, and other stakeholders; and
  - 3) form task teams to complete specific analyses, reviews or evaluations.
- Information from the RIST is scientific or technical and is intended to inform policy and management decisions: not to prescribe or make decisions.

The April RIST report answered questions that the SRD posed to the RIST concerning recovery plan implementation including ecological effects, potential effects of weirs, and alternative fitness functions for different species and life history types. Our initial reaction is that the RIST report is very supportive of the HSRG reports and provides helpful advice to those who intend to use them. For instance, the RIST report states in part:

“We believe the general thrust of the HSRG recommendations are scientifically sound and will lead to an improved situation for wild salmon populations, ...

In an effort to take full advantage of the HSRG’s work, I am very interested in having SRD staff meet with representatives of the HSRG (including Mike Delarm, a member of the HSRG and senior biologist on the SRD staff) to ensure that we fully understand and use the HSRG’s work appropriately.

The RIST report also identifies a number of areas of scientific uncertainty. We encourage a dialogue between the HSRG and the RIST to help establish priorities for research that will lead to progressively better information and tools to resolve uncertainties and guide future management decisions.

Thank you in advance. I will be contacting you in an effort to schedule a meeting. If you have any questions, please call me at 503 231-2285.

Sincerely yours,



Robert G. Walton  
Assistant Regional Administrator  
Salmon Recovery Division

CC:

Mr. Andy Appleby, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Dr. Donald Campton, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mr. Mike Delarm, NOAA Fisheries  
Dr. David Fast, Yakama Nation  
Mr. Tom Flagg (Dr. Des Maynard, alternate), NOAA Fisheries  
Dr. Jeffrey Gislason, Bonneville Power Administration  
Mr. Paul Kline, Idaho Department of Fish and Game  
Mr. George Nandor, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife/Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission  
Dr. Peter Paquet (chair, 2008-present), Northwest Power and Conservation Council  
Mr. John Barr (vice chair), Independent Consultant  
Mr. H. Lee Blankenship (vice chair), Northwest Marine Technology  
Dr. Trevor Evelyn, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (retired)  
Dr. Lars Mobernd (chair, 2000-08), IFC, Jones and Stokes  
Mr. Stephen H. Smith, Stephen H. Smith Fisheries Consulting, Inc.