

Thursday, July 28 2011

Attendees

WDFW

Heather Bartlett

Sara Laborde

James Dixon

Jeromy Jording

Annette Hoffman

Ron Warren

Attendees

Public

Michael Schmidt - LLTK

Clint Muns - PSA/Rec fish Alliance/chair PSRE

Al Senyohl- Steelhead Trout Club

Dick Burge - Wild Steelhead Coalition

Nick Gayeski - Wild Fish Conservancy

Frank Urabek - CCA

Frank Haw - CCA/NWMT

Roger Urbaniak - PSA/Issaquah hatchery advisor board

Lee Blankenship - HSRG

Thursday, July 28, 2011

1:49 PM

Heather starts off with introductions

Expect to have either Lee, Lars, or Andy A at some of the meetings for HSRG perspectives

Next meeting is 9AM - 1PM on August 11th. Puget Sound Chinook is the Agenda for that day.

Meeting notes will be distributed, and at the WDFW hatchery division site will be set up with documents that are distributed during meetings.

First thing we talked about last meeting was the F&W commission policy/description of HAIPs, statewide steelhead mgmnt plan, PRA, hatchery performance tables, population designation background (used LCR as an example to hone thinking about population designations), Chinook tracking table, timeline matrix for HAIP completion (schedule is intended to align with NOAA's NEPA EIS)

Frank U - so this meeting group will help shape some of the Dept.'s thinking regarding HAIP development

Heather - the role is advise the Agency on population designation, and assist in HAIP development. For steelhead we'll use whatever the TRT has currently available. Advise on speed of how we achieve HSRG, recommendations on possible WSMZs, population designations.

Lee B- How do HAIPs, HGMPs interrelate.

Heather- The HAIPs describe the programs, the HGMPs takes the agreed to programs and is the basis for ESA coverage. The motivation for the tribes is completion of the EBD (agreement on artificial production). We need to meet with them to make specific changes to meet HSRG standards.

Frank U- so the HAIP is a vehicle to accomplish components of various laws

Nick G- Could you briefly describe the HAIP and RMP, which NOAA is in the process of reviewing?

Heather- That question shows the emphasis for the Agency to work on this, as they are developing alternatives for the EIS. These broad alternatives should encompass all production regimes we can think of. The HGMPs in draft form we have right now fit in the draft umbrella, and so it could meet ESA standards, but maybe not HSRG standards, and therefore our direction won't be met. If we don't make changes now, we've lost our opportunity to make changes with our comanagers to get towards HSRG standards.

Al S- what about the Sept meeting dates?

Roger- Question on the scenario that it was a goal to keep the excess hatchery fish off of the returning redds. You also mention that the tribes have the stance that a fish is a fish. Is there science that says that wild fish, other than being the goal are a super species by comparison.

Lee B- there's lots of science behind it. In my opinion it's not even debatable. NMFS recognized in their last 4d rule for the CHMP that there is a fitness effect, but what that exact % is open for debate, 10-90% of reduced fitness, so that's debatable. The length of the time they spend in the hatchery, various other factors, and its been done by several groups. The NWPPC, HSRG, RIST, the list goes on and on that this is decided scientific theory.

Clint - Several things were the Chinook in Puget Sound listed in entirety?

Heather- Yes

Clint- So how do we project to the public that the steps to recover the entire ESU?

James- One semantic issue that has a lot of difficulty is there is a difference between recovery and delisting. When the populations become self sustaining enough to be delisted is decided at a federal legal level, versus the recovery boards determining status of recovery. To speak to your question the entire ESU will be delisted when 100% of the populations fit the criteria. You can't delist just some sub segments of the ESU.

Clint- well it just needs to be explained due to the publics perceptions of all these fish are out there why can't I fish. Is there going to be an attempt to address those life cycles of missing yearling life histories?

Al S- Yeah, the black box. We're getting a minuscule % to the straits and so we're not going to get many back.

Heather- clarifying question about the yearling populations, what are you thinking?

Clint- we've reduced our yearling production to a subset of what it once was. IT's my understanding that black mouth came from the spring and summer stocks, and they residual zed better than the fall stocks, and are we going to account for that? I understand we won't keep cranking out fish if the survival isn't there.

Nick G- That's more a matter of the life history of the populations that need to be recovered, and that's more to make sure hatchery production isn't getting in the way of the recovery of the natural populations. Folks should be familiar with the populations that include hatchery components.

Frank H- One of the stocks that shown a propensity here is White R Springs.

Clint- And could we have more examples of White R Springs type stocks where they once existed. I have interest in making sure those are considerations. There is still a strong interest in the year round fishery.

Heather- I think it will come up.

Dick B- on PRA on page 9 it begins talking about habitat, and are we going to apply any habitat designations here, and if not why not?

Heather- We can use the information that at least comes from the TRT, but this forum is not set up to look at that.

Dick B- if the habitat has already been categorized then

Heather- so we have it for Chinook, and it's built into the tiering system already.

Dick B- If we're designation populations it seems like habitat will drive success for survival.

James- that is definitely part of the discussion for non-listed species. For Chinook in particular there are some populations that we may be able to have conservations on to steer what the designation might be. Chum, pink, sockeye there hasn't been this large federally reviewed habitat components.

Lee- The PRA acknowledged habitat quality

Heather- What I'm hearing you say is taking the habitat designations that were done for Chinook and use them for the other species.

Lee- The PRA designations hasn't gone under public review yet. The tribes don't want to classify it that way, as then you can't recover the ones you've lost already.

Nick G- a follow up on that being a draft, the PRA has gotten some pretty serious criticism on statistical grounds alone. Not until the

James- mostly we wanted to bring it in as a reference of the current thinking on the federal side, not for the concepts but an effort to focus recovery dollars on the best places first is something we agree on.

Nick G- quite apart for habitat prioritization, is the purpose of the PRA is jeopardy decisions

James- the PRA does say that this does not redirect under increased viability

Frank U- the PRA is in contrast with the Recovery plans, and I just want to say the better source might be the WRIA recovery plans. I can tell you that those folks differ with that.

James- I don't fully agree with the designations contrasting. The concept of what that did that had historic Chinook that still have the same Chinook were tiered in a certain way.

Heather- the discussion here highlights the importance of designation, and how that drives decisions on hatchery programs and risk. That has ripple effects into fisheries, and use back into the habitat for spawning.

Frank U- A lot will come out of the wash when we go through a basin and try to designate

Al S- the habitat is also very different from 50 years ago

Heather- the next agenda item is WSMZs and its been a really important part of conceptualizing our thinking of having areas where we are not releasing fish in a watershed. Same species hatcheries programs are important to notice here, as it doesn't mean you couldn't have a different species hatchery programs present.

Frank U- If you had one of the zones like the Skagit, I didn't think we would go there on that scale

Heather- (Reads the handout about the WSMZ)

James- that's the discussion we're looking to have here. This is the policy direction we are looking to apply what constitutes and what scales these are issued at.

Frank U- So in the Puget Sound region does this mean you just have to 5 regions?

Heather- It has to think about what species?

James- Geomorphic ally they have similar strata.

Lee- That's the same for steelhead?

James- For each population group in within each ESU. To answer your question it would be multiple singular populations around the sound. Of the species present naturally at whatever scale a population would be designated per the policy. There are different scale possibilities here.

Frank H- So we are talking using the same regions for all anadromous species.

James- So in the minutia of recovery terminology, there's independent populations identifies. For Chinook there's 22, and the biogeographically populations are overlaid over those. For Steelhead we'll verify, but they tend to overlay the same strata structure.

Dick B- I think we should consider more than one in strata where we have more than one major hatchery. It seems that we should try to counter the impact of a major hatchery effect in each area.

Heather- Ok I hear what you are saying, and I just want to say up front it will be difficult to identify in some situations more. But we are willing to discuss that and encourage it.

James- This could be examined at determining scale at which its applied

Dick B- Yeah I totally agree with that.

Nick G- There are already some areas with where we could do that depending on the size of programs.

James- so should the same definitions be applied across species. Is there something unique about steelhead versus Chinook or other species to sufficiently differentiate between species? We're talking about the interaction between fish in the freshwater life history.

Frank H- How do you deal with the races, like SH winter and summers?

James- well that's same species regardless of race, and so that brings up issues in watersheds where we have overlap of life histories.

Frank H- So you'd need to have a zone for winter and summer fish? Say like in the Whidbey area?

James- In that sense yeah.

Frank U- If we can get agreement on one of these, we have to keep in mind that for the public we need to try to keep it simple.

James- Good point, and designating WSMZ doesn't preclude fishing.

Frank U- But if you don't allow hatchery fish it affect fishing there.

Heather- yes, and we have some useful criteria to help establish some rules of the road. Do we want to use what we had for steelhead and apply it in other areas. We need to be able to talk about our logic path.

James- when I think about the Steelhead designation applies for a given population that encompasses spawning habitat, rearing habitat, and may take the entire basin. Maybe not depending on the scale.

Heather- yeah folks can ponder it, and we don't have to make a decision today

Annette- do a trial run for species to see if it works and come back

Dick B- it looks like having one in each river should be our goal

Heather- The areas are wide and using Annette's suggestion of doing some mock ups will help you out first.

Nick G- there might be some need to change definitions across species, specifically in regards to rearing strategies differing across species.

Heather- So are we ready to move onto population designation?

James- So we farmed out some information from the latest recovery plans that should help to get concepts across. The map is useful to give the broad view across what the defined areas for populations. So these represent the macro populations, genetically grouping together in this way. WRIA and SASSI stocks always start with Nooksack and ends with Elwha. Skagit is a watershed that sticks out in its complexity. For whatever reason they chose not to differentiate races in the designations. (Goes through Chinook stocks).

Clint- maybe this backtracking, particularly with the Skokomish and reintroduction of spring stocks. As we move forward with the hatchery policy are we going to make it hard to do restoration efforts?

James- well in my mind I only see recovery of those stocks you may have a chance to rebuild the tendency for residualization of some of these stocks. We heavily supplemented those stocks, but recovery will drive this.

Clint- I don't want to diminish recovery, but I also don't want to limit our ability to restore populations.

Nick G- I think you are more talking about reintroduction of a stock that might have been there and extirpated now.

Michael- is this process also about improving hatchery production for harvest.

Heather- Yes, but I'm hearing suggestions here that would promote life history diversity.

Frank H- I think we're already heavily under restoration.

Heather- and in the Skokomish the tribes really want to emphasize bringing back Spring stocks.

James- right now the fall stock is the only one that exists and recovery has been laid out to recover the primary stock that's there right now.

Nick G- those situations are going to be driven by the habitat accessibility, and within some reasonable time frame.

James- The Cowlitz or Lewis system is a good example of this where mitigation settlements involved reintroduction of stocks in certain habitat ranges to try to get races re-established. So each populations are then broken into the Geographic regions. The 5 geographical regions need to include 2 - 4 viable populations. The next page is an illustration of the health of the populations in relation to the ESU.

Heather- So at the base of all of this our hatcheries pose a risk to the listing. We need to reduce that risk, habitat has to do theirs, we have to address our hatchery 'H', as well as our harvest.

James- on the back side of the page is using the VSP parameters. You can read through here and see that these populations to be considered a VSP you would go through and ask whether it meets these parameters. These aren't telling you what size they should be, but are necessary characteristics. The TRT tends to make the determination on what they need to be. Designating populations means settings them for viability. (James reads through Designation for C&R handout) Three categories for use in population designations are: Primary, contributing, and stabilizing which tries to define their viability, not their priority. The viability goal defines the risk, as primary populations have low risk for extinction. Contributing populations don't have the same viability level as a primary populations, but contribute to recovery significantly. Stabilizing populations have low viability. The next page is the Hatchery Reform Application. When the HSRG started with the CR review they had concepts of management, and in terms of making recommendations to apply towards recovery were developed there. Broodstock management strategies were developed in coordination with the VSP theory to incorporate risk thresholds for recovery efforts. What I was hoping to convey here is the conceptual ideas about recovery down to how recovery plans have adopted viability thresholds for risks to the populations, and how we are going to have to manage production in coordination with that.

Nick G- So how good is the data on pHOS right now? If pHOS is .2 across the board it moots the point.

James- after we come back you get to see that.

Sara- that drives the priority discussion

James- Even if a stock has been designated as not very important, you could say you could expand the use of production to counter a reduction on a very important program.

Lee- A very key metric under integrated is pHOS should not be greater than .30

James- Yes there are upper thresholds for pHOS

Clint- So we are here to focus on hatchery reform, and how are we going to address the harvest component

Heather- it is highly probable as we go through this process and come through with a primary population and a large hatchery program associated with it, we have to figure out a way to reduce the risk the hatchery fish pose if they return.

Lee- its taking me a long time in accepting the Agency's idea here about separating harvest. IT's incumbent on the Agency to reduce production, insert weirs, or increase harvest.

Clint- So Soos Creek production, we cut production to achieve that.

Heather- But when we sit down in the watershed it's unlikely that the tribes will agree to reductions.

Michael- I hope that we can go farther in this group. If we don't know what the department is planning it will be difficult to see where we go.

Lee- So how do we model solutions if you don't bring in harvest and weirs?

Sara- so we are going to look at strictly hatchery program changes. We're not going to model harvest pieces. This table that we just passed out is what we are going to use to get us there.

James- So this table is a draft of the population worksheet of we're thinking about here. This example is snohomish basin Chinook. It shows upper left corner species and watershed, and then the natural Chinook populations. To the right there is broodstock management sections displayed. The pHOS level for current production levels are listed first. The the right is the acceptable levels given the population designations. The Snoqualmie is managed in a segregated fashion, and so the levels are lower, because we are talking about stray rate influence. The PNI is only in reference to the Wallace. The draft designations we've given you are only drafts, and so this is giving you an idea of where we are currently, and what standard we could meet under other designations. The wrinkle in the Snoqualmie, these are mostly hatchery strays, that may have out of basin strays. The stray risk is not all accounted for from the in basin hatchery fish.

Frank U- it's one thing to get strays from inbasin, but how does that affect our role here?

James- well that was a question that was brought up last meeting. You'll have to start deciding when you get to those programs.

Nick G- All hatchery origin strays.

Lee- and under current practices do you stop at the Skykomish Falls area, and at the hatchery rack do you pull out hatchery fish there? So you don't allow hatchery fish above the Wallace rack?

Nick G- right but there's a lot of natural spawning habitat in between

James- and the goal is to elevate the PNI right?

Lee- yeah

Frank- if we have weapons of choice without reducing the fish for harvest, my path is to go that route. The last thing I want to see is reduced fish for harvest to choose every pathway there.

Sara- but we may feel so important about a population that we take a hit on a program to reduce harvest.

Nick G- Could we come into compliance by reductions or actions affecting the Wallace program.

Lee- At Tokul creek.

Frank H- What about a beach seine fishery?

Al S- are all the Tulalip fish marked

James- they are all thermally marked

Al S- They talked about strays from Tulalip being an issue at Wallace.

James- We were talking about what the preferred stock was to run out of Wallace. We switched over in '05 and those fish at that point weren't marked. But Tulalip sampled 100% those years broodstock so we were able to back calculate.

Michael - so why aren't these a primary stock

James- So the Tulalips want to eventually get there.

Heather- We chose to prioritize the population higher than NOAA's recovery plan.

Sara- there isn't a watershed that doesn't think their fish is more important.

James- So the option is that once habitat needs improve you can work your way up to a new population designation.

Frank U- So at Soos CK they have a problem getting NORs

James- It is an issue in Snohomish, but to a lesser extent.

Frank U- So if we jack up the level higher than what you had we have to see the costs, and benefits.

James- and that's listed in the next part of the table, and the fisheries component is all fisheries. The resulting broodstock metrics are then reduced or increased to show the effect.

Lee- when the HSRG reviewed this, this was the most adapted program in Puget Sound, and the brood stock mining here was a concern.

James- we outline these as thresholds

Frank U- So what is your number that you have on the spawning gravel, and the difference is what's left over for the hatchery production

Nick G- so if you meet the natural escapement, and the resulting NORs don't allow you to meet the PNI you should be, then could you reduce the program to meet the target PNI

Lee- you want to think of that over time, because some years you'll get PNI that's really low, so it's an average goal.

James- and a lot of these situations we're talking about a state funded harvest programs, and funding doesn't fluctuate along the lines of what you are suggesting. This is a fairly well integrated program, and you'll see the changes to total NOBs, but these are well integrated fish and you may have an escapement threshold but when thinking about the size of a program only based on the NO fish needs to be considered over more than just a yearly basis.

Michael- So first have we even talked about whether the population should be higher than

Nick G- Yeah I think the whole Snohomish population should be

Michael- and so it seems like its feasible to do that, but how does it contribute current production?

James- well you then move into the options of time and actions to get that done in. Some of these are doable immediately as it is simple program change.

Al S- It seems like the Snoqualmie is a different issue here though.

James- I feel .10 of the current estimate is in basin stray rate, and you could suggest a mark selective fishery in the river for two weeks to get some of those out of there.

Al S - Is the Tolt a WSMZ?

Heather- No, its not formally

James- Well that functionally allows us to evaluate areas, if we have already stopped planting

Lee- our number one recommendation was to switch from a fall Green

Frank U- you are trying to get us a response advice, and we're getting educated here. But we don't have a consensus, and a lot of this is new and I can't tell you right now whether I'd be for staying with a contributing or going to a primary status.

James- This was an effort to determine if this could steer your thought process.

Clint- with compared with all of the others rivers in that region?

Heather- this is really just intended to be an example today. We just wanted to examine if this is enough information to make a recommendation.

Sara- the real question is what are the ramifications, and isn't that the total harvest? It's either how it addresses harvest or how it interacts with fish on the spawning grounds.

Frank U- With me I want to maximize harvest.

Heather- I hear people want to do broodstock management piece at a minimum. We should be able to bring that back that this is the benefit and costs.

Clint- we need to look at every river in the region

Heather- We need to really be looking at this in a species to deal with that.

Frank H- if all of this works, aren't we saying that by going to a primary regime natural production would increase?

James- Yes, so it would take less risk in the long term by managing to a higher PNI.

Nick G- Do you have the data to get for the NORs the spawner to spawner productivity.

James- that's the key, but for that you need a parentage analysis.

Lee- I think you can think about compromises in contributing and primary.

James- in the last scenario you end up with a higher PNI, larger program but with w/ broodstock mgmt it still increases PNI.

Al S- so are we seeing changes in odd to even years, as we're seeing large number of pinks coming back

James- so whether it has a biological affect it does have a function on our ability to work with that number of fish.

Sara- so what is your priority here for this population?

Al S- I say don't fix something that isn't broken.

Michael- well what's the limiting factor here? Is it a habitat constraining factor? IF that the case then status quo seems to be working, but if there's a suspicion otherwise then we should look at that.

Nick G- We also don't know the legacy on wild populations from the previous strays.

Michael- was there indication that the life history should have been different here?

Nick G- There is still that component of life history that shows up in the smolt trapping data. There is reason to think that the past level of hatchery straying has compromised the genetic diversity.

Frank U- So we are helping you and where are the tribes long-term here.

Sara- The tribes are wanting to stay contributing short term and go to primary long term.

Frank U- so what does the time frame mean?

James- Mostly in terms of time frame is along the timescale of habitat restoration.

Sara- so we have already had some of these discussion in Snohomish, and so we know a bit more here. Nick when you talked about unique life history, was that just Sno? So we'll have some amount of sheets of paper to give to you and so you can see it in the whole scheme and you can try to make a recommendation. Our original thought was to break it up into work stations.

Frank U- I don't know that as valuable versus the whole group approach

Al S- just tell us how fast you want to move

Sara- Do we want to have modeling options as we go through.

Frank U- So a faster turn around on getting the notes

Al S- yeah more capture notes than verbatim

Sara- so what are the major alternatives to model here? It may not be data

Lee- So where does the Dept go with a recommendation?

Sara- So if comanagers say we are going to manage at higher conservation level NOAA will say thank you very much.

Heather- So we will have an active system to take notes on what we want to move toward

Al S- So we talked about whether the fish heading around the possession bar are in better shape, and

Lee- I can tell you that productivity is opposite what it was. North Sound used to be the lowest.

Nick G- Its not just relative, its absolute.

Sara- I like everything on one page, is there key information that you want us to put all on one page?

Nick G- Life history, hatchery population listed

Sara- a big harvest component or not

Heather- can we take out some of that from the TCW data

Clint- can we break it down to nontribal and tribal

Sara- we can dump recovery goals

James- well Michael brought it up, but if your program is out of whack. They're just reference points.

Annette- Can we add PHOS options for Snoqualmie on the worksheet?

Frank U- So if there a way to incorporate a sense on whether habitat improvements are being incorporated into a watershed to influence population designation.

James- we know what the tiering system would say, and that will play in with the population designation.

Frank H- So what about the weir on the Nisqually?

Sara- We're going to try to get that wet this year, based on permits.

Michael- will there be any hatchery programs not captured?

James- Yeah we won't be having segregated programs.

Heather- we will be covering them

James- If people want to see options for modifying those programs we be able to do that

Frank U- so we spent today to learn with the Snohomish or do we have clean up with the Snohomish.

Sara- We'll start with the Nooksack and we'll go from there.

Roger- what about monitoring of the effectiveness of habitat restoration?

Sara- I think that type of monitoring is a red herring that watersheds want to pursue. Unless you spend a ton of money over 20 years you'll never get at that. The key is changes in fish in and fish out. So the state has done a statistical analysis of over time what types of projects shows fish response, and that give direction to the SFRB for investment purposes.

Roger- I just see a lot of groups trying to make a living at that without effectiveness.

Michael- so the WSMZ are they part of watershed by watershed?

Clint- I think its that way.

(Discussion about habitat restoration funding)

Next Meeting: August 11, 9AM - 1PM