

Tuesday, August 11

Thursday, August 11, 2011

8:59 AM

Attendees

WDFW

Heather Bartlett

Sara Laborde

James Dixon

Jeremy Jording

Annette Hoffman

Ron Warren

Public

Michael Schmidt - LLTK

Andrew Marks- CCA

Dick Burge - Wild Steelhead Coalition

Jamie Glasgow- Wild Fish Conservancy

Frank Urabek - CCA

Frank Haw - CCA/NWMT

Roger Urbaniak - PSA/Issaquah hatchery

John Barr- HSRG

Andy Appleby- HSRG

John Barr- in many cases a PNI of .67 is too high for recovery. But for reintroduction Purposes or reseeding habitat that may be a chance you take. Risk tolerance is a matter of what people are willing to accept.

Sara Laborde- so as we go through population by population and this group feels like it needs to be more conservative on a population bring it up. Our commission has established that by 2015 our hatchery system would be meeting HSRG standards.

John Barr- Except for recovery programs.

Heather Bartlett- correct. The conversation we had last time was really good.

Frank Urabek- How do we arrive at the end of the day, and how does this really help us in the end?

Heather Bartlett- we'll get the notes out so we can reference that, and we'll have populations that we are likely in the same mind set. I don't think we'll come to consensus, so we'll take the information and use it.

Sara L- so we'll plow through each of the populations, and we have options that we'll want to look at and at the next meeting we'll bring back what we heard.

(1st handout) James- We're not going to be able at this point to cover fishery changes at this point. The harvest rates that are built into these are the ones we have now. This is a snapshot of the AHA model, the left hand corner are the titles of the populations, and then scenarios that affect the population. (Goes through the handout).

Heather B- So we are assuming MSF are occurring and you may have an interest to see what the MSF harvest rates are to determine what the total ER is on a stock.

Sara L- When we started to look back, we want to determine if this area is going to be a priority for MSF determination or not. If we can flip the switch here that helps us.

Andrew Marks- So WSMZ we haven't defined yet correct?

Heather B- folks recommended using the SSMP definition, no hatchery fish in a watershed by species.

Michael Schmidt- does that include conservation programs?

Heather B- yes

Andrew M- do we ignore strays in that case?

James- we would still monitor for strays, and take into account the hatchery programs that are contributing those strays. And it doesn't preclude harvest at all.

Start out with NOOKSACK SPRING CHINOOK:

James- NF, independent population, the biogeographic region is the uppermost PS. One stock is NF one stock is SF. Samish, Lummi net pens

John B- One thing I think would be educational would be if we zeroed out hatchery production and show those effects.

James- so the NF Springs are identified as a primary for long term viability. The designation question is not applicable here. WDFW operate the Kendall creek program, integrated program. The PNI is low at 8%, and for a primary we want 67% but remember it's a conservation program. The habitat potential is 1.18 for recruits per spawner. Currently this population might not exist if not for this program. Also the ability of the system to support a sizable population is questionable. We are just meeting minimum metrics with this program, and it needs off station collection to keep it going. The limitation on meeting broodstock metrics above stabilizing is pHOS.

Frank U- So if we eliminated this program based on the small % of contribution we wouldn't lose much

Sara L- Not at all. It may be small but overall it could have a huge benefit.

Andrew M- Wouldn't the habitat capacity increase here?

James- The capacity and productivity is based on each other and restoration.

John B- Another thing might be helpful are the fitness factor. As taking in a pHOS level at .3 brings down the fitness to .81 here.

Dick B- So that's a huge loss.

Michael S- so what is the history of the program, why is it at 850k.

James- it started at 1.5million and we had a lot of yearlings. As the program started to recruit we were getting 90% of the hatchery fish back, and they were straying into the SF, and co-manager approval went with subyearling program.

Heather B- the overall program has been reduced and made into a subyearling to reduce risk.

James- So I guess what you guys could say is there

Michael S- are there co-manager constraints there?

Sara L- so the habitat here is crap. The Nooksack is trashed. The harvest is ratcheted down on this stock to <4% and we can dig on this but Nooksack we don't have traction here to really find a silver bullet here.

James- this one is a habitat restoration issue here. So we also have risk here just to keep this population going.

Frank U- yeah exactly.

James- So do we concur with the primary population designation

Michael S- because we don't have a choice, yes.

James- Should we adjust program here?

John B- is there an intermediate level here to try to propose? A higher PNI might be possible.

Andy A- so any R/S below 1 isn't sustaining itself. An intermediate program for 300-500k now you are suddenly modifying it towards getting towards a larger PNI.

James- but its not a priority to get this population to HSRG to 2015 due to it being on life support. We can design a program here to meet an intermediate program.

Dick B- If we were to stay at current and go to a .5 pHOS and we have this genetic risk facing us where are we at 5 years from now? Are the fish so maladapted that we can't ever get back?

James- that is a risk, but what's worse extinction or maladapted fish?

Sara L - the TRT decided we would try to get this population back.

James- right as at the time of listing this population was in the dumps. The risk is high and the genetic fitness level may continue to degrade, but the other option is extirpation.

Michael S- So I keep hearing the habitat is awful here, why are there conflicting opinions out there?

James- Each habitat mitigation project is an experiment that hasn't been evaluated for the term its necessary for habitat to recover. The Nooksack has been industrially logged for a long time. The performance of the stock should tell you what the population is up against.

Michael S- Not with the hatchery affects contributing to degraded fitness

James- still though the effect is contributing

Andy A- the question is there room to change anything on this program?

Frank H- Looking at the no hatchery option is critical to see what the effect is here.

Heather- So what we'll see here is that we have a balance that we are worried about genetics, but the small amount of fish left may be so inbred without a hatchery component it would have the same effect.

Andrew- we've already identified the limiting factor is not the hatchery here, and I'm not comfortable to being constrained to the hatchery number. The big qualifier here is are we going to move towards habitat recovery?

James- You have to assume that.

Andrew- I think we have to be aware of the other what if scenarios? Does that change the question and answer?

Sara L- by meeting the standards for 2015, habitat will not help us.

James (models taking hatchery program away)- so up on screen with no hatchery we end up with about 600 NOR spawners. You lose 300 spawners after 100 generations. Most escapement years are going to be at the end of the range for recruits.

Andy- So can we attempt to increase the PNI above .5?

Heather- so we model something that is intermediate, 300-500k with a PNI above .5 and the notes will show it.

Andrew- And so what we elected to look at was two scenarios that we didn't use, but I think we should label these as staff recommendations.

James- well for lack of a better term I am trying to book end some options here to look at.

Dick B- we keep talking about genetic risk, but to date I haven't heard what that risk is in 25 or 50 years, so that where are we where we can't recover it. Do we have a % at where chance of recovery is gone?

James- So in past years we've introduced stocks of fish here or there and even a highly domesticated stock of fish like Chambers may produce offspring.

Heather- I want fish that can sustain themselves, and I also don't expect PS to ever be pristine again. I want the NORs to be self sustaining.

Dick B- So the NORs have a much better chance to adapting in their own environment than the hatchery fish.

Sara L- we agree with you on that.

Andy A- the model assumes that the fish can never lose more than half its fitness. Skamania steelhead to the great lakes, Sacramento to New Zealand, these are examples of the where hatchery fish have been put into vacant habitat and over and over again they are able to establish themselves into these habitats. The way we

run our anadromous programs, where over 1/2 their life the fish have to run the wild gauntlet we assume 1/2 of the fitness will always be there.

Dick B- I think the recent literature shows that steelhead shows that in 10 generations we'll be putting mal adapted fish out that will destroy these populations.

Andy A- I still use my Skamania S in the Great Lakes, we now naturally producing populations that are self sustaining. We can argue what the floor is, and I'm letting you know that the model uses 50%.

Dick B- I just wanted to highlight what is the risk we are taking?

Sara L- We aren't going to answer that here.

Heather B- We go back to our commission policy. Based on primary, contributing, stabilizing those are the bookends. If we get our programs to some of these we are better than where we are at now.

Sara L- at a population level we can take recommendations and show you ramifications of that.

James- and if its dramatic enough we might not be able to get ESA protection for it either.

Andy A- the assumption right now is that the fitness of these fish is as low as it goes. We are trying to improve them from the base where we are at now.

Sara L- unless we started with a great stock of fish now.

Michael S- So stray rates are being estimated now?

Jamie Glasgow- So what about out of basin strays, and cost of program? Whether or not the hatchery has a barrier or not?

John B- if you go to the first sheet the next to the last line shows the distribution of destination, and so 80% of the population is ending up on the spawning ground, and 20% is going into the hatchery.

James- The second table shows that the NF pop is straying into the SF. The 2nd page there is currently not a program that releases fish, but there is a captive brood program. The SF is another primary population; the hatchery program is a captive brood at Manchester (NMFS, WDFW, and Nooksack). The pNOB at this point is 1, but may be NF strays. The estimate here may give us a stray rate out of the NF and be another reason for reduction of the NF program.

Dick B- so for WSMZ it looks like we need strong habitat areas.

James- right so this three years right now to build a captive, and we usually have 3 broods before the captive brood is large enough for plants.

Sara L- So all I'm hearing here is if NF is straying here we need to address it.

Norm- So in most natural populations straying contributes to diversity

James- true but here we are talking about unnatural straying, as these fish have a high domestication load.

Andy A- yeah the reproductive success of stray hatchery fish is extremely low.

Bertrand Lummi Program (Samish fall Chinook releases in net pens)

James- so the stray rate of these fish into the Nooksack. This is a segregated program for harvest. These contribute to MSF summer and winter fisheries.

John B- these are out planted, and how does the 90% hatchery return and 10% pHOS? Isn't that backwards?

Michael S- So the biggest concern for the next couple programs is straying correct? What's the Dept.'s policy at this point? We don't want to increase the size of the program until we know the stray rate?

James- We want to know if that is a priority to bring that stray rate down.

Michael S- the assumption is that the stray rates aren't equal across each facility, and I think that's a good approach.

James- So we have individually marked releases so that we can identify which program is releasing the most strays or least strays, would the group say that's a goal by 2015?

Sara L- which likely would be we would affect the programs that we have most influence over.

James- so we have 3 years out in the ocean and we ...

Andrew- Would it be reasonable to influence the outplant procedures.

James- So these fish are coming from Samish, and we have been able to influence outplants.

Michael S- So from our stray rates we changed stocks. I wouldn't preclude adjustments within those facilities so long as you're not pushing it above the levels you are at now.

James- and so other option would be if we look at a MSF here?

Heather- so we want to try to make sure programs get within stray limits total for receiving populations. And we'll model selective harvest if it can affect.

Sara L- So we want to address the program that has the most straying issues, by total numbers. I'm more concerned by taking out the non co-management programs.

Jamie G- doesn't the condition of the population that is receiving strays contribute to the answer.

Roger U- stray rates are highly annually influenced by weather

John B- yeah, but we have very little information across the board about stray rates in general for Puget Sound.

Heather B- So our take home is to come back with an intermediate option to get PNI above .5 for NF, and strategies that get us below that on the segregated programs for pHOS.

SKAGIT:

James- (lists the handouts for each Chinook population). Relative little amount of production.

Heather- they are indicator stocks to track effects of fisheries.

James- So the lower river Chinook have been identified as primary by the TRT, and there is no program with them, and no substantial stray issue identified here. The question here is this a population for a WSMZ or not? It's a substantial part of the basin for sure. In perpetuity we would not start hatchery production.

Annette- there might be some value to have those indicator stocks available.

Frank H- cant' you use the wild fish for that?

James- consistency of capture for program

Heather- I hear you won't be able to understand the effect of fisheries of this stock if you do that, and so I'm hearing that the group is willing to make take that risk?

John B- Well is there a surrogate you can use?

Sara L- well if we wanted think about bringing a tag group back in we would bring that up.

James- Well the indicator stock is on hiatus for budgetary reasons. We'll revisit those when we come back.

UPPER SKAGIT SUMMER CHINOOK

James- largest population in drainage. 200k DIT group release. Looking at standards it meets HSRG standards, and this stock is identified as a primary. We could say it's a priority to keep those standards. There's not a role for MSF as the program is an indicator group. There's a potential here for WSMZ, unless the indicator group is a priority.

Sara L- So we wouldn't prioritize this to start a program.

UPPER CASCADE CHINOOK

James- so this is a spring stock, primary, and has a segregated indicator program on it.

Annette: It's a DIT group, so its 400k.

James- so there is a fishery benefit to this group. We have some MSF in the spring on this group in some years. Fisheries are still the same, and we could effectively double the production and not violate the stray rate.

John B- I see what the figures say, but some straying studies indicate that the straying is not as limited as this is saying, and from what I've heard.

James- So the district staff has garnered this information, and I'm hearing that this needs a validation. Let's assume that it is higher than 5%, would the group propose a reduction or initialize a MSF here.

Annette- the MSF in place has been there since 2003.

Frank U- I support looking at the MSF option to reduce pHOS here.

Michael s- so for an increase I would argue against.

James- So if we can develop a long term viability to track fish without the DIT program we could identify this as a WSMZ, for Chinook.

Andy A- so the increased production option, this is a segregated program started from Sauk-Suiattle, so an out of basin stock, and whether or not that functions well as a DIT group or not you can make an argument. There are some different genetic risks here with that.

Frank U- Do we have another option?

James- you could use and integrated program, but you run the same risk.

Andy A- but if we were to restart the program with the correct stock, the options for changing the program would allow you to adjust it.

Heather- I see how that works.

James- One thing I think that is important about that is whether or not you preclude it's usefulness for MSF.

Sara L- so given what we're hearing on the Elwha and Wind about starting up an additional program I think this is too much of a political lift.

Jamie G- What about GSI use for stock management?

James- George Adams we have tried this and sample the Ocean Troll fishery to examine this. Currently there is no broad scale at which we would shift. The two remaining programs are Sauk and Suiattle.

SAUK & SUIATTLE

James- So these are distinct candidates for WSMZ, as there are no programs with these, and they are both in the sub-basin.

Frank U- So what's the smallest scale we are talking about?

James- That's a great question. So the definition is that there is no influence of hatchery fish on the adult and juvenile components.

Group- overall agreement here for WSMZ

Frank U- downside?

Dick B- You just can't put a hatchery in here.

LOWER SAUK

James- So I don't have a handout for this population, and we don't have a program there, and the habitat is some of the best we have. So this is another candidate for WSMZ?

Heather- so I have a suggestion for a quick lunch break and then start on the Stillaguamish.

(break)

STILLAGUAMISH:

Both stocks are independent populations for recovery. First drainage to consider pop designations.

NF Stillaguamish...small recovery program = 220K subyearlings, operated cooperatively with Stilli tribe. Doubles as supplementation and index fishery monitoring. PNI std. met for contributing pop @ 0.50, but pHOS is elevated at 0.44. Limited fishery benefits.

James - modeled hatchery programs for primary stock designation. But would require addn collection of NOB from spawning grounds. Whitehorse facility is not good location for NOB collection. Typically get fish through in river seining. So increasing the trapping of the facility by 5% can be done. By doing this it would not substantially increase the abundance of the natural fish. The fitness would move from .63 to .84 so we would see overall improvement.

John B- The broodstock would be very low though in that case.

Andy A- so the HR the HORs have a lower rate than the NORs. What did we use for these. Seems odd.

James- so if there's no differential harvest the pHOS is going to be slightly higher. So based on the PRA this is a 2nd tier population, and has biological importance, but not equal to other primary stocks.

Sara L- We and the co-managers view it as a primary stock.

James- so in comparison to Nooksack its pHOS and PNI are better, however we are still looking at habitat improvements to move this stock into better condition. It's the productivity that is driving the low abundance. There is low harvest here, total ER of 25% so we are below productivity of 1 and without the program NOR replacement wouldn't be occurring. High thresholds may run about 10 recruits per spawner.

Sara L- at recovery goals we have goals of 2.8 with the highest of 4.6 in Elwha, so that is best case scenarios.

James- and it shines a light on watersheds that are currently productive as well.

Jamie G- so if we use R/S is there a way to tease apart the habitat from the fitness?

James- there is a way to do that, and we don't typically parse that out, and it is an important part of the discussion. Assuming a static ocean survival yeah, the population is only limited by #'s of outmigrants. So does the group consider this a primary stock or should we go with NOAA's PRA 2nd tier assessment.

Michael S- so NOAA put this population as a 2ndary as there are the other population in the basin that they designated (Whidbey Basin).

James- excellent point. In Whidbey you have a slew of choices for populations. That's going with the minimum criteria though.

Michael S- is there a reason for going above and beyond the minimum then?

James- catastrophic risk is somewhat reduced. You can't horse trade between basins though. There is an ESU risk that has to be assessed. The Dept. is in draft agreement with the tribes about designating this as a primary stock.

Frank U- I don't have a problem with that.

Frank H- What about sustainable fisheries?

James- Well if we took the program out, which we aren't suggesting, but you could run the program at contributing.

Sara L- If co-managers would look at one stock that we should laser in on its Stilly.

James- and its one of the basins where the tribes have decided not to fish at all. That's a big driver to try to ensure that we recover this stock. The 2ndary question is speed, we're currently not getting a harvest benefit out of it, but if we focus it on by 2015.

John B- it's a conservation program though.

Heather- but we've modeled what it would take to get to the primary goal here.

Andy- leaving the pNOB goal, and if we could just nudge down the pHOS level by removing the hatchery fish during broodstock collection.

Sara L- So do we go straight to primary in the next 4 years or do we focus on lowering pHOS here. So where are people focusing here?

Frank U- I like the intermediary.

Dick B- What does the next 4 years mean?

James- In 4 years we would release fish that would meet a certain pHOS level which would result in a pHOB level at return.

Andrew- and so the intermediate step sounds like it just ensures that we don't affect the broodstock in a certain %.

Roger- do the tribes benefit from the removal of the hatchery fish?

Heather- likely

Frank U- can we put a weir in here?

Sara L- interesting idea

Frank H- So these fish do enter selective fisheries

James- yes, to assess the effect on this stock. If the co-managers who have a lots of different funding sources we might be able to do some things here.

Michael s- why would you focus on this stock versus the Snohomish?

Sara- this is a constraining stock. It's a small drip of a population, and we may disagree on timetables but we agree we need to do something here.

James- so a priority for a 2015 I'm hearing a "NO" for meeting absolute standards, and there's not a role for MSF here. The WSMZ isn't an option as the hatchery program is keeping the population alive, and it would be detrimental to remove the program. So maybe within 10 years we could move the PNI to something approaching primary, and reduce pHOS now.

Andy- and you can get a long ways by reducing pHOS, and at whatever level the tribes can make a use of hatchery fish you can drive the PNI to a primary right away.

Heather- Ok, South Fork

James- So these are a fall race. The intent is starting a captive brood program here; don't know the timeframe for this to begin.

Annette- they don't have a hatchery yet, they're still trying to build it.

James- it is a fall Chinook in the Whidbey basin, so its not completely an uncommon stock. This is one where you could consider it a non-supplemented population at this point, but if we wanted to consider a WSMZ here would could try to argue against the captive brood program, it is a very low fitness level.

Sara- so we are going to try to start a conservation program, what the group's decision for a primary or tier 2 populations?

Andy A- it looks to be on the verge of extinction. I don't know if in the future its genetic legacy is viable. Given the current productivity and capacity this is never going to be a Skagit. It's difficult for me to consider this as a driver for recovery as a primary population.

John B- Same argument for NF though.

James- Ok, but due to recovery requiring no stock to fall behind where they currently are, this will continue to drive fisheries. The annual numbers of fish here is <200 fish.

Michael S- So just to be clear you can't write off the population?

James- Functionally it would take a rewrite of the recovery plan and that's very unlikely to get the parties to agree to that.

Sara I- so where does the advisory group land? We don't have a hatchery program here, so I guess we can move on.

Michael S- Well it would have some influence on habitat projects and actions within the basin. We may want to revisit this later on.

Sara- ok. So we'll put down contributing then at this point from Frank H's suggestion for South Fork.

SNOHOMISH:

James- So Skykomish Summers are a tier 2 and Snoqualmie Falls are tier 3 in the PRA; so a contributing level of viability for recovery.

Dick B- any idea why they classified them as that?

James- the co-managers have a short term and long term goal for the stock. We have a question of whether it is a concern for meeting HSRG by 2015 and that's our time of length.

Sara I- so we have gone through most of the negotiations for this watershed. This area we want to let you know that we have engaged very heavily here already.

James- we are looking at a contributing level here, and the tribes are looking at the habitat to improve stock productivity and are willing to agree to lower tiering here.

Frank U- so we don't have to spend much time here?

Heather- well if you are in support of the contributing designation we could expand the program a bit here.

Frank H- is there a potential here for a WSMZ here above sunset falls?

James- by definition no, as we have mixing above and below. Basically it's a good monitoring point and collection as far as stock management goes.

Andy A- the area above sunset falls is only about 30% of the rearing habitat, its not a bad idea, but it doesn't fit with the definition.

James- If there was a different population of fish up there it might work.

Heather- If you looked at the population holistically you can manage one component very conservatively and then be less conservative with other components. That would have a ripple effect to the overall population in a positive way.

James- We are functionally managing it to try to get as many fish out of the upper system as we can.

Frank U- so you want our blessing?

Andy A- so before we decide let's talk about the falls as there are direct effects across the populations.

James- so its maintain the current program at Wallace, the 2ndary benefit is the Tulalip Hatchery Summer Chinook. When we collect broodstock we manage for both.

John B- when we are trying to reach a pHOS goal you have to consider both then?

Heather- Yes. And so the results we are seeing here are the combined programs.

James- so don't know if we need to focus on the Tulalip program here, but we do have an MOU to operate the facility at a certain level and that underlies the discussion. So the Snoqualmie Falls showed a heavy stray rate of

the hatchery fish, and so now we don't a program for the falls. It has substantially reduced the stray rate. There's an 18% total pHOS in the watershed. We have a few out of basin strays, but slightly less than 1/2. Drafting it as a contributing, the programs within basin would meet the standards minus the out of basin strays. Another couple of years will lend clarity to what programs are straying. These two programs in the basin are balanced for a moderate level of conservation, and fairly high level of fishery contribution. On balance it's a wholly beneficial program, other than the straying issue.

Andy A- Is there currently a MSF in the lower Snoqualmie?

Annette- we might be able to get that in.

James- so I think Nick would have a good opinion on designation.

Jamie G- Yeah so one vote for primary.

Michael S- So I would bump Sky/Sno over Stilly. I would vote for primary here.

Frank H- I like that as well.

James- so the 1st option would be to look at lower Snoq MSF to reduce the strays from the Sky and Tul.

Annette- so the issue that will come up will be getting our broodstock. We've had to close our fishery early for the last 3 years will exacerbate the problems.

Andy A- if the fish are in the Snoq they won't ever be used.

Annette- so if we focus our MSF on strays in the lower Snoq. We might be able to solve that issue and lower our pHOS

James- Ok so we'll put that in as our preferred option.

Michael S- so for Skykomish Summer we're on primary?

James- Ok, but it's a no for 2015. And for Snoqualmie Falls we're going to WSMZ designation?

Heather- yes.

LAKE WASHINGTON:

Sara- just as a reminder before we move on, don't let us forget to put habitat questions and press us on what we do. I know this is a hatchery / harvest discussion but we need to hear some of that.

Frank U- So what are you going to do about it then?

Sara- I can't answer that right now, but there is a report that tries to evaluate habitat improvements.

James- Ok so onto LK WA. The two populations are Sammamish/Issaquah Creek population and Cedar River populations. So the Samm/Iss is listed as a tier 3 and we are proposing a stabilizing population that would concur with that. There is a substantial program on the program. It currently has a high pHOS and low PNI. The

2nd scenario presented here is a no hatchery if we were to try to balance it to a contributing level. The model shows no functional population if the program was eliminated. Straying into the Cedar is the concern with the program currently.

Andy- No problem here as a stabilizing pop.

Frank U- I'm okay with it, as the only WRIA 8 member here.

John B- So what are the goals for a stabilizing population? Are we playing with this population can't get any worse?

James- I use the LCR definition of no worse than current. These are last risk type of programs, and if there were floods in all other basins you could go into Issaquah and you'd have a genetic representation of what a Puget Sound fall Chinook looked like.

John B- so if you assume the population isn't going to get any worse, then HSRG assumes that the fitness level will flatten out and won't get any worse. IF you don't accept that, then stabilizing populations will continue to decline fitness to a level of unsustainable even within the program.

Michael S- so the integration is simply to benefit the hatchery population.

Andy A- its to make sure the two population don't diverge genetically.

James- so stabilizing is consensus.

Group- yes.

Sara I- I would presuppose that we don't have a WSMZ here.

James- so only stray rate is a 2015 priority, but what if we find out if the stray rate is high?

Frank U- it's been changing rapidly.

James- so Cedar is the 2nd population, and it's designated as a tier 3. So this designation has an effect on external programs.

Frank U- so there are physical things we can do.

Frank H- What are the arguments against primary?

James- Even if all Cedar components were restored it's a small population.

Frank H- but it's got a unique life history associated with a lake

Andy A- since 1917, but for thousands of years before that it was a tributary of the Green.

James- So it would be an increased productivity if we designated it to a primary.

Frank U- We can pull the strays in the Cedar, so if we went from 15 to 10 is doable.

Frank H- Regionally it's a significant population.

Frank U- If you have these designations and downgrade them it affects our funding. We don't want to lose that.

Jamie G- what happens at Landsburg?

Frank U- All the fish get passed now. That number is increasing. We can put our hands on every fish, and we could this year take the hatchery fish out.

Jamie G- That's ridiculous isn't it?

James- we would be thinking about the sockeye collection as well.

Jamie G- if there's an ecological justification we should rank it as primary and show that there's a reason to.

Michael- I still consider the ranking in the context of the entire ESU. This thing about Landsburg is an easy recommendation that we all agree to take those fish out.

Frank U- Yeah let's put it out there.

Andrew M- I think it's a good question to ask why it isn't a primary. What is the significance of the recommendations here? Can we not revisit these further?

Andy A- I for one if the removal at Landsburg would bring it to contributing then . . .

Frank U- Take a look at it.

Sara L- There was one issue where harvest was too high, and NOAA said that because its not required for recovery they could live with it.

Annette- if we are under the LK WA ER then Cedar is protected.

Sara- Is the population designation tied to that?

Frank U- could funding be affected by PRA or designations?

John B- well you also get out of it an increase in productivity.

Sara- go after contributing if you can be more effective at getting at pHOS.

John B- Remember though that we're talking about possible recolonization.

Heather- WSMZ for the Cedar?

Frank U- Above Landsburg.

Heather- we don't have a program there, and we aren't planning on instituting a program.

Michael S- so it should push it towards a primary population designation. The point would be to remove hatchery fish from interaction from the population.

Heather- so stabilizing population for Samm/Iss and we want MSF to get at the stray rate, not a WSMZ candidate. For Cedar we are at contributing, and we'll look at Landsburg fish removal, and a candidate as WSMZ.

GREEN RIVER:

James- so we're still in the mid south sound. This is the source stock for a lot of fish populations. Soos Creek hatchery used to be called the White R hatchery (1907). It puts about 3.5 million fish out. Currently PRA tier3 designation, and very high harvest thresholds. The productivity capacity estimates when EDT was done it was not done in the Green R basin. They chose a different model, and I'll have to reload what these rates represent. Our draft designation is a stabilizing.

Frank H- I saw a tier 2 in the PRA.

James- Oh you are right Frank, at the 1st cut at the analysis Green R was the highest ranking tier 3 and because they needed it as another tier 2 they moved it. So for the best designation for long term habitat the Cedar is probably better fit than the Green. So we're asking what you think about it for designation in relation to the ESU.

Frank U- A stabilizing is your lowest level, and that seems like we don't worry about the wild fish then.

James- I would say we haven't been worrying about the wild fish with our hatchery fish and harvest management forever. The fish in the Green represent the fish that have always been in the Green, but not at historical productivity levels.

Frank H- I think that stock is extremely important historically, and Nisqually and Mid Hood Canal basins needed Green R stocks and none of those have demonstrated self sustaining stocks.

James- If the Nisqually wasn't poised to step forward to establish locally developed population; an impetus for a moderate level of conservation would be there. It's the 2nd most productive stock in the region.

Frank H- the other thing is the habitat issue, as over a million pink salmon think it's pretty good.

Andy A- the Green has a long history of defying the habitat and conditions of it. Lake WA and Issaquah isn't as good as the Green in my opinion. The stock has been very productive. These values of recent years aren't out of the ball park. This might be a strong hold.

James- I would argue we may be seeing how productive the Green is, as we've changed the management recently. The juvenile trapping estimates should back that up. We've had massive winter high-water events and for two years now we have a total lack of natural production.

Andy A- I don't think that changes the long term habitat capacity. I'm arguing for at least a contributing. You should try to preserve this population at a higher level. In the LCR when they designated primaries they paid attention to the genetically similarity to the historical population genetic origin. The other populations are all descendant from this stock.

James- so there would be a marked reduction in the program and a necessity for collection in the brood to get that done.

Frank H- so you can actually get your hands on the fish there.

Annette- we get a handful.

Sara- so hatchery production drops from 3.5 to 1.24 million.

Heather- so the program sizes are pretty close from primary to contributing.

James- so Green river is the only stock that has an escapement goal. The black shows that we have well integrated fish.

Frank U- we can try MSF and still haven't gotten beyond the Muckleshoot.

Jamie G- MSF should be something we mention at each one of these.

James- total escapement is the objective, and the 5,800 is not NOR specific.

Frank U- So are we saying we don't want to do anything for wild fish here.

James- it means its not a great candidate for HSRG recommendations.

Sara- so is there an intermediary step for this stock?

James- a contributing population assumes something like an addition of the weir, and pHOS is the limiting factor. The issue with here and LK WA we have the same comanager. You'd be asking for reductions on both their primary U&A programs and fisheries. The Cedar as far as restoration its got a city behind it, it's got a larger civic group behind it, just overall more support.

Frank U- I still have a problem about saying we are not going to care about wild fish in the Green.

James- That's not what we are saying. The recovery plan acknowledges that these populations can't get any worse. I don't think it's a stretch to say the Green is a domesticated stock is a stretch.

John B- A lot of stock we are relying on for recovery are relying on out of basin stocks. Here this is still a genetic legacy that has adapted to the watershed somehow.

Michael S- at the same time you've said this stock has been replanted everywhere else and taken hold.

Andy A- Yeah but when thinking about the ESU in total there is something about preserving a native stock in its own watershed versus going to another watershed and prioritizing it over using an out of basin stock.

Michael S- is there anything you can do that's not changing the production size?

Andy A- there's only 3 ways to reduce pHOS.

James- One of the issues is there hasn't been recruitment into the Green. There's been discussion about augmentation about upping the program to put more fish on the spawning grounds. We could model a weir in the Green similar to Nisqually. I'm hearing at least something contributing.

Michael S- I wouldn't throw it as contributing.

Frank U- there are problems, but we want to look at what we can do here.

Annette- so are you guys saying stabilizing but. . . Keep pushing for wild fish to gain or evaluate what we can do.

James- So I hear "A" we are willing to sacrifice production to see, and "B" devise a continuous realistic program based on some weir assumptions.

John B- we also have to look at the natural population. ER of 60% on the natural stock isn't possible.

James- You can go forward during the next iteration of the harvest management plan to have discussion with the Fishery Management folks to make that case.

John B- If you aren't addressing HR you're blowing in the wind.

Andrew M- Can we start off with the Green next time to continue.

James- Sure. We'll get materials up on the website and notes.

For lack of no notes - raw notes suffice to distribute.

Next meeting August 31st 1pm to 5pm