

“GREEN SHEET”

Meeting dates:	January 10-12, 2008 Meeting (Briefing)	#15
Agenda item:	Hatchery Reform Progress - Briefing	
Staff Contact:	Jim Scott, Chief Scientist (Fish Program)	
Presenter(s):	Jim Scott, Chief Scientist (Fish Program); Ron Warren, Hatchery Division Manager (Fish Program); Sara LaBorde, Special Assistant (Director's Office)	

Background:

Hatchery programs can provide fishery and conservation benefits but can also pose risks to wild salmon populations. The potential risks include: a) poorly designed weirs and intakes can result in passage blockages or mortality; b) ecological interactions like competition and predation can reduce the productivity of wild populations; c) interbreeding of hatchery and wild fish can reduce the ability of the wild population to survive in the natural environment.

Hatchery reform is the systematic application of scientific principles to hatcheries to help recover and conserve naturally spawning populations and to support sustainable fisheries. The hatchery reform initiative, building on the work of the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG), is resulting in a substantial change in the underlying paradigm for hatchery operations. Hatcheries are no longer viewed as an isolated, structural replacement for habitat, but as an integral component of the watershed. They must be designed, operated, and evaluated in the context of the ecosystem in which they reside. Successfully implementing this new paradigm requires a structured process of establishing program goals, evaluating program benefits and risks, modifying fishery and hatcheries, and monitoring program performance. Maintaining and improving habitat is essential for successfully implementing hatchery reform and for the conservation of wild populations of salmon and steelhead.

The agency is moving to aggressively implement hatchery reform, with significant changes in stock assessment, data management, fishery and conservation planning, as well as the operation of hatchery programs. The ongoing process of the re-invention of hatchery programs will pose substantial funding and logistical challenges. To expedite this process, an agency team has been formed:

- Sara LaBorde, Special Assistant to the Director, will focus on implementation of the 21st Century Salmon and Steelhead Initiative, ensuring that hatchery reform, salmon recovery, and selective fisheries all work together to recover salmon and steelhead populations.
- Ron Warren, the new Hatchery Division Manager, will focus on improving the effectiveness of the Hatchery Division in implementing on-the-ground-reform principles and actions.
- Heather Bartlett, the new Salmon and Steelhead Division Manager, is working with IRM to further develop selective fisheries and implement the Statewide Steelhead Management Plan.
- Jim Scott, former Chief Fish Scientist, is on a 12-month assignment dedicated to implementation of hatchery reform, including the development of a long-term plan for Puget Sound and coastal hatchery programs and the 2009-2011 budget request.

Policy issue(s) you are bringing to the Commission for consideration:

None. Briefing only.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

N/A

Action requested:

None. Briefing only.

Draft motion language:

N/A

Justification for Commission action:

N/A
