

Puget Sound Steelhead Advisory Group

QuickSilver Portfolio

May 15, 2020

The Puget Sound Steelhead Advisory Group has worked for three years to develop a vision for the future of our State Fish – steelhead – in Puget Sound rivers. Through those discussions we developed the QuickSilver portfolio of proactive management strategies and actions. We believe that management should match the reality of conditions on the ground. We propose using common sense coupled with solid science to direct steelhead management and provide a diverse portfolio of steelhead rivers that achieve both conservation and fishery goals.

Our presentation today includes:

- Introduction and Key Concepts (Jonathan Stumpf)
- Report Walkthrough (Derek Day)
- Implementation (Andy Marks)
- Summary (Al Senyohl)

We have come together and are now asking you to join with us in supporting the QuickSilver portfolio. We stand ready to work with you to engage stakeholders, promote legislative support, secure funding, and assist WDFW in implementation. Together, we can conserve wild steelhead, restore fishing opportunities, provide economic benefits to our communities, and create a future in which the rich tradition of steelhead fishing is continued and passed on to future generations.

Proposed Initial Implementation Steps

Watershed-Scale Experiments

- Develop and implement watershed-scale experiments to test alternative hatchery and fishery strategies. For example, monitor the performance of fisheries and wild steelhead abundance, productivity, diversity, and spatial structure in the following rivers:
 - Nooksack River – wild broodstock conservation program, perhaps focused on restoration of early timed steelhead
 - Skagit River – no hatchery program, catch and release recreational fishery
 - Stillaguamish River – early winter hatchery program, catch and keep recreational fishery.
 - Samish River – wild steelhead management without fishery until catch and release fishery approved and implemented.

Population Monitoring

- Develop estimates of spawners for key populations (S.F. Nooksack Summer, Deer Creek Summer, N.F. Skykomish Summer).

- Expand current testing of the sonar from the Dungeness River to at least two other rivers (Nooksack, Samish, or rivers listed above).

Fishery Planning and Monitoring

- Maintain funding to monitor the Skagit catch and release fishery.
- Pursue co-manager agreement and secure ESA-approval and funding necessary to implement Samish, S.F. Skykomish, and Elwha fisheries.
- Secure funding and monitor the encounters of adult and juvenile wild steelhead in fisheries directed at early winter steelhead.
- Secure funding and evaluate the impact of various gear types and fisheries on adult and juvenile steelhead and salmon.

Hatchery Planning, Production, and Monitoring

- Ensure funding and resources are provided to monitor gene flow from early winter steelhead to wild steelhead populations and obtain accurate estimates of pHOS.
- Secure funding to conduct research regarding the ecological impact of integrated and segregated hatchery programs on wild steelhead (in conjunction with NOAA, tribal, and other scientists).
- Pursue co-manager agreement and secure ESA-approval and funding necessary for increased production from the Dungeness Hatchery and new early winter programs in the Big Quilcene and Sammamish Rivers.
- Pursue co-manager agreement and secure ESA-approval and funding for a wild broodstock program in the Nooksack River.