

STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
HABITAT PROGRAM

January 20, 2004

To: Regional Habitat Program Managers  
Assistant Regional Habitat Program Managers  
Area Habitat Biologists

From: Greg Hueckel, Assistant Director

**SUBJECT: SIGNATURE AUTHORITY**

One of the recommendations of the HPA Task Force under the general heading of "Consistency" was to review signature authority for HPAs and implement any needed supervisory oversight protocols resulting from this review. In response to their recommendation, I asked Peter Birch to work with the Regional Habitat Program Managers on this subject and to provide me with their recommendations.

From their recommendations, I realize the elevation of signature authority for higher priority HPAs and denials could help in intercepting controversial issues and improve quality and consistency of our HPAs. However, I have concerns that elevating signature authority adds more time to the issuance process because of the extra review layer. Of equal or greater importance is for AHBs to continue to keep his/her supervisor informed of controversial and contentious emerging issues associated with HPA applications.

Following discussions with many of you, I have decided that the best course of action for the immediate future for ensuring consistency in dealing with contentious issues, but maintaining our relatively quick issuance process for most HPAs, is to maintain our current signature authority and implement the following procedures:

**Denials.** Any HPA application that the Area Habitat Biologist considers should be denied will be immediately forwarded through the Assistant Regional Habitat Program Manager to the Regional Habitat Program Manager with an explanation as to why the application should be denied. The RHPM will review the proposal in consultation with the Peter Birch and the appropriate Regional Director. If the proposal to deny the application is agreed to, the Regional Habitat Program Manager will sign the denial. If the proposal is not agreed to through this process, the application may be returned to the Area Habitat Biologist with appropriate directions to complete the issuance process.

**Significant Issues.** Area Habitat Biologists will continue to keep his/her supervisor informed in a timely manner of any emerging contentious or controversial issues associated with HPA applications. Regional Habitat Program Managers, in consultation with Regional Directors, Peter Birch and me, will work as a team to provide advice and direction to the Area Habitat Biologists on a case-by-case basis.

Cc: Larry Peck  
Peter Birch  
Steve Penland  
Gayle Kreitman  
Regional Directors