

## **Puget Sound Steelhead Advisory Group (PSSAG) Meeting Notes**

February 22, 2018, Noon – 7PM

Embassy Suites, Lynnwood, Washington, 98036

Drafted by Cole Caldwell and James Scott

Revised Draft April 3, 2018

### Key Messages to Stakeholders Agreed at Meeting Conclusion

- 1) Reductions in hatchery programs and further restrictions on fisheries in themselves will not recover Puget Sound steelhead.
- 2) Habitat protection and restoration is critical for the recovery of Puget Sound steelhead.
- 3) The PSSAG will be identifying habitat strategies and actions that have proven successful in the conservation and recovery of salmon and steelhead.

### Agenda Items discussed at the meeting:

#### **1) Introduction**

#### **2) PSSAG Questions on Potential Skagit Integrated Hatchery Program (Gary Marston, Bethany Craig, and Brett Barkdull)**

- Review preliminary responses

#### **3) Northern Cascades MPG Steelhead**

- Review draft delisting scenarios
- What are our aspirational objectives for Northern Cascades recreational fisheries?
- Would an artificial production program help achieve conservation or fishery objectives?

#### **4) Habitat Strategies and Actions – What does the PSSAG Envision?**

- Develop and discuss options for incorporating habitat strategies and actions in PSSAG recommendations.

#### **5) Looking Ahead**

#### **6) External Messages**

- What are the 3-5 messages regarding this meeting that we want to provide to other interested stakeholders?

#### **7) Public Comment**

#### **8) Thoughts on Meeting**

### Advisors Attending

David Yamashita

Jamie Glasgow

Derek Day

Gary Butrim

Curt Wilson

Rich Simms

Nick Chambers (for Rob Masonis)

Curt Kraemer

Al Senyohl

Andy Marks

Roger Goodan

Conrad Gowell (for Jonathan Stumpf)

Public Attending

None

Staff Attending

Jim Scott (facilitator)

Brett Barkdull

Jennifer Whitney

Edward Eleazer

Anja Huff

Gary Marston

Bethany Craig

Notes from the meeting per agenda item:

**Introduction**

- Jim distributed the agenda and multiple handouts to the group and then discussed the meeting agenda and tasks that the PSSAG would be working on for the meeting.

**PSSAG Questions on Potential Skagit Integrated Hatchery Program**

- Bethany Craig (WDFW) provided a Powerpoint presentation regarding “Residualism and Precocity in Hatchery Steelhead Programs” (see handouts)
- Gary Marston (WDFW) led a discussion of the document “Follow-up Questions and Analyses: Potential Skagit River Integrated Hatchery Program, Draft February 21, 2018 (see handouts).

**Northern Cascades MPG Steelhead**

- Jim distributed the draft delisting scenarios developed by each of the subgroups (see handouts).
- Subgroup 3 subsequently changed the proposed designation for the Skagit population from Contributing to Primary. Note that table below also corrects error in geometric mean for subgroup 3.

Population	Contribution to Delisting				Comments
	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	
Drayton Harbor (w)	C	S	S	C	(2S, 2C)
Nooksack (w)	P	P	P	P	(P)
S. Fk. Nooksack (s)	P	P	P	P	(P)
Samish/Bellingham (w)	P	C	P	C	(2C, 2P)
Skagit (s/w)	P	P	P	P	(4P)
Nookachamps (w)	C	C	P	P	(2C, 2P)
Baker (s/w)	S	C	S	C	(2S, 2C)
Sauk (s/w)	P	P	P	P	(P)
Stillaguamish (w)	P	C	C	C	(3C, 1P)
Deer (s)	P	P	P	P	(P)
Canyon (s)	C	P	C	P	(2C, 2P)
Snohomish/Skykomish (w)	C	P	C	P	(2C, 2P)
Pilchuck (w)	P	P	P	P	(P)
N. Fk. Skykomish (s)	S	C	S	P	(2S, 1C, 1P)
Snoqualmie (w)	C	P	P	P	(1C, 3P)
Tolt (s)	C	P	C	P	(2C, 2P)
<b>Geometric Mean</b>	2.25	2.47	2.15	2.71	

(w) = winter, (s) = summer, P = Primary Population, C = Contributing Population, S = Stabilizing Population

- Subgroups developed draft portfolios for the Northern Cascades MPG.
- Although none of the subgroups provided a portfolio that included an integrated hatchery program for the Skagit River, the PSSAG agreed to include it as an option for consideration at the next meeting.

### **Habitat Strategies and Actions – What does the PSSAG Envision?**

- The PSSAG developed initial concepts for habitat strategies and actions:
  - Protection is as important as restoration.
  - All Hs, including habitat degradation, should be held equally accountable for impacts to steelhead.
  - Habitat regulations (Critical Areas, Growth Management, Shoreline Protection,...) should be assessed relative to their effectiveness in the conservation and recovery of steelhead.
  - The Habitat and Hydro sectors should be challenged to match the hatchery and fishery sectors in improvements in practices and reductions in mortality.
  - The habitat factors limiting steelhead should be identified and addressed.
  - Best Management Practices should be identified to help promote voluntary actions to improve water quality and quantity, reductions in pharmaceuticals, and forestry practices.
  - “Hold the line” on further habitat degradation.
  - Move beyond All-H and recognize that no one has the moral high ground. It will take a concerted effort on all levels and all dials need to be turned at the same time.
  - Identify habitat strategies and actions that have proven successful in the recovery of salmon and steelhead. Solicit presentations from NOAA, WDFW, and the tribes.
  - Habitat restoration is expensive, but so does the ongoing effects of ESA-listing. Pay now or pay later.
  - Advocate for ecosystem or river basin restoration to benefit all species.
  - Identify research needs.
  - Specific concerns have been identified in discussion and presentations:
    - Contaminants (particularly in the Nisqually River)
    - Parasites
    - The effect of operation of hydroelectric dams on the hydrology, gravel recruitment, channel structure, riparian structure, and food availability on the Skagit River.
    - Changes in hydrology resulting from landuse and watershed cover.
  - Rebuild resilient ecosystems.
  - Habitat restoration has not led to more fish. Ensure that enough fish escape to restored habitat. More salmon means more nutrients, more food, and more productive steelhead populations.
  - Advocate for mark-selective fisheries to reduce impacts on wild fish.
  - Include all viable salmon parameters (VSP – diversity, spatial structure, productivity, and abundance), not just abundance, in the development and evaluation of restoration projects.
  - Invite leaders of processes to PSSAG meeting and weigh in on importance of actions for steelhead:
    - NOAA Recovery Plan

- Puget Sound Partnership (why no steelhead vital sign)
- Stormwater Planning
- Funding for important projects at local, state, and federal level.

### **Looking Ahead**

- The next meeting will be on March 29.
- The principle agenda item will be developing a provisional portfolio for the Northern Cascades MPG
- WDFW will complete a coarse scale assessment of the subgroup draft portfolio to assess consistency with the draft delisting scenarios.

### **External Messages**

- Reductions in hatchery programs and further restrictions on fisheries in themselves will not recover Puget Sound steelhead.
- Habitat protection and restoration is critical for the recovery of Puget Sound steelhead.
- The PSSAG will be identifying habitat strategies and actions that have proven successful in the conservation and recovery of salmon and steelhead.

### **Public Comment**

None

### **Thoughts on Meeting**

This agenda item was not initiated in response to the inclement weather and the interest in ensuring a safe passage home.