

Puget Sound Steelhead Advisory Group (PSSAG) Meeting Notes

Sept. 10, 2018, 11AM – 6PM

Embassy Suites, Lynnwood, Washington, 98036

Updated Drafted by Jim Scott, **Nov. 7, 2018**

Agenda Items:

1) Introduction

2) Skykomish Winter Conservation Program

- Review analysis
- Group discussion and recommendation

3) Green Summer Steelhead Program

- Review results from coarse scale assessment
- Group discussion and recommendation

4) Finalize Puget Sound Portfolio

5) Discussion of PSSAG Habitat Recommendations

6) Discussion of Next Steps

- What will be the format for the documentation of the PSSAG recommendations?
- What are our next steps?

7) External Messages

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

8) Public Comment (maximum of 3 minutes per person)

9) Thoughts on Meeting (quick comment limited to a maximum of 30 seconds per person)

Advisors Attending

Jonathan Stumpf

Curt Kraemer

Al Senyohl

Roger Goodan

Mark Spada

David Yamashita

Andy Marks

Gary Butrim

Jamie Glasgow

Curt Wilson

Rob Masonis

Rich Simms

Public Attending

Conrad Gowell

J. Michelle

Nick Chambers

Staff Attending

Jim Scott (facilitator)

Brian Missildine

Gary Marston

Jenni Whitney

Annette Hoffmann

Notes from the meeting per agenda item:

Introduction

- Jim distributed the agenda and provided PSSAG members with handouts of the provisional portfolios for each of the Major Population Groups.

Representation of Advisors by Alternates

- Jim reviewed the ground rules for the representation of advisors by alternates (see notes from meeting of June 1, 2017). These ground rules allowed for an alternate to participate in the advisory group discussion if: 1) the alternate had regularly attended previous advisory group meeting; and 2) had received prior approval from the facilitator. Jim noted that the PSSAG process was now driving toward a conclusion and that the Department wanted to focus on learning the perspectives of those who had been selected as PSSAG members. Therefore, effective as of this meeting, only the advisors would participate during the main body of the meeting, but the perspectives of alternates and the public would be solicited during the public comment portion of the agenda. **Public comment did not occur at this meeting as time ran out before agenda item 4 was completed, and no time remained to initiate agenda items 5-9.**

Skykomish Winter Conservation Program

- A preliminary analyses of potential Skykomish Winter Conservation program were provided to the PSSAG at the June 27 meeting.
- Gary Marston provided responses to questions from that meeting and additional analyses for a program with a 100,000 smolt release (see handouts).
- PSSAG comments and questions included the following.
 - The primary action step needed for Puget Sound steelhead is a reduction in pinniped predation.
 - PIT tags would provide valuable information on survival rates.
 - Acclimation sites would need to be found and the juvenile steelhead should be allowed to acclimate for at least 6 weeks.
 - The analysis assumed that 70% of the returning adults would spawn in the river. This may be difficult to achieve as adults will home to the hatchery where initial rearing occurred.
 - Actions should be identified to reduce the mortality of natural-origin juveniles while they are rearing in the river, perhaps gear restrictions and a delayed summer opening.
 - It would be useful to show the benefits of habitat restoration and a reduction in seal predation.
 - The cost of the program, including monitoring, should be provided.
 - The rationale and hypotheses for the program need to be further developed:
 - What problem is the program trying to solve?
 - Where is spawning occurring and in what areas of the river are there insufficient spawners?

- The PSSAG concluded that it did not support implementing the Skykomish Winter Conservation Program at this time.

Green Summer Steelhead Program

- Jim summarized the proposed Green Summer Steelhead program (see handout) and noted that NOAA Fisheries is currently working on the ESA review.
- The PSSAG supported the program with the fishery/hatchery adaptive management provisions (Provisions) previously developed:
 - Monitor the performance of the fishery to assure that it is providing the anticipated benefits to the recreational fishery. Contribution rates were low until recent years.
 - Continually look for ways to improve the performance of the hatchery program.
 - Ensure that the fishery directed at returning fish from the summer hatchery program does not appreciably slow the recovery of early-timed natural-origin steelhead.
 - Scale the number of summer steelhead released to the returns of NOS; perhaps revisit every 5 years.
- Further development of the fishery/hatchery adaptive management provisions is expected as the PSSAG completes development of the Puget Sound portfolio.

Finalize Puget Sound Portfolio

- Hood Canal and Strait of Juan de Fuca – the PSSAG finalized the portfolio with the following additions, clarifications, and exceptions.
 - Include the fishery/hatchery adaptive management provisions for each hatchery program.
 - Maintain the long-term research program conducted at Snow Creek.
 - Include in the documentation that WDFW has identified the Elwha River as a Wild Steelhead Gene Bank.
 - Do not implement a segregated program in the Skokomish River at this time. Reconsider this recommendation if access in the lower river is provided in the future.
 - Jamie Glasgow will discuss with WDFW staff the potential stray rates from the proposed Big Quilcene early winter program to the Hamma Hamma, Dosewallips, and Duckabush components of the West Hood Canal population.
- Central and South Puget Sound Portfolio
 - The group confirmed the North Lake Washington and Cedar River components of the portfolio.
 - The advisors discussed the Green River winter integrated program but time ran out before the discussions were completed. There were questions at the meeting if an analysis of this provisional program had been previously presented. After the meeting, Jim found that the presentation occurred on November 16, 2017 (see handouts).
- **Independent Scientific HSRG** Review of Puget Sound Portfolio
 - The advisors discussed a proposal to request an **independent scientific** review of the hatchery programs that do not currently have ESA-approval. **The Hatchery Scientific Review Group and Washington Academy of Sciences were identified as potential entities to complete the review.**
 - Further discussion of the proposal was deferred until the next meeting.

All additional agenda topics were deferred until the next meeting.