



NOAA FISHERIES

West Coast Region

Puget Sound Steelhead Recovery Team Introduction: Terms of Reference for Recovery Team Members

Introduction

On May 11, 2007, we, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), listed the Puget Sound steelhead distinct population segment (DPS) as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Section 4(f) of the ESA authorizes us to convene recovery teams to assist in the development and implementation of recovery plans. The Puget Sound Steelhead Recovery Team (Recovery Team) will be appointed by and act as an advisory group to NMFS's West Coast Regional Administrator (RA). The Recovery Team is being convened to assist the RA in developing a recovery plan, identifying priority recovery actions, and providing input and recommendations on specific recovery issues. The ESA exempts recovery teams from the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requirements.

We developed these Terms of Reference with the following objectives in mind to: 1) specify the functions and composition of the Recovery Team; 2) define the team's roles and responsibilities; and; 3) gain the active commitment of all team members to help develop a plan to achieve full recovery of the Puget Sound steelhead DPS. These Terms of Reference will remain in effect as long as the Recovery Team is in place or until superseded. They may be modified if the need arises and at the discretion of the RA. This document will be distributed to all team members prior to the first meeting, and it will be reviewed at recovery team meetings as needed. Costs of Recovery Team management will be assumed by NMFS West Coast Region.

Purpose and Objectives of the Recovery Plan

The primary objectives of the recovery plan are described in Section 4(f)(1)(B), which states that to the maximum extent practicable, a recovery plan must contain at a minimum:

- 1) A description of such site-specific management actions as may be necessary to achieve the plan's goal for the conservation and survival of the species;
- 2) Objective, measurable criteria that, when met, would result in a determination, in accordance with the provisions of this Section, that the species may be removed from the list;
- 3) Estimates of the time required and the cost to carry out those measures needed to achieve the plan's goal and achieve intermediate steps toward that goal.

Northwest Indian Tribes have legally enforceable rights reserving to them a share of the salmon harvest. A complex history of treaties, executive orders, legislation, and court decisions have

culminated in the recognition of tribes as co-managers who share management responsibilities and rights for fisheries in the Puget Sound.

Ensuring a sufficient abundance of salmon and steelhead to sustain harvest is an important element in fulfilling trust responsibilities and treaty rights as well as garnering public support for recovery plans. ESA and tribal trust responsibilities complement one another. Both depend on a steady upward trend toward ESA recovery and delisting in the near term, while making aquatic habitat, harvest, and land management improvements for the long term.

In addition, NMFS' recovery planning guidelines stipulate that recovery plans must include a concise summary of the current status of the species and its life history, and an assessment of the factors that led to the population decline and/or that are impeding recovery. It is also important that the plan includes a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan for gauging the effectiveness of recovery measures and overall progress toward recovery.

Relationship to Other Recovery Plans and Refinement of Site-Specific Management Actions

The recovery plan will focus on DPS-wide actions for the Puget Sound steelhead DPS. It will identify the relationship of Puget Sound steelhead recovery planning and implementation to recovery implementation for Puget Sound Chinook and Hood Canal summer-run chum. The plan will allow for refinement of site-specific management actions and will include a template for watershed-scale recovery plans. The plan will be amended as watershed-scale plans are completed.

This process will consist of the following steps to develop the recovery plan and update it over time:

- Prepare a draft DPS-wide recovery plan for Puget Sound steelhead; incorporate existing implementation actions for Chinook and Chum salmon by reference
- Develop a template for watershed-scale recovery plans, including guidance on key elements, planning tools, and relationship to pilot projects under development.
- Finalize the DPS-wide recovery plan, incorporating any watershed-scale recovery plans completed by other entities.
- Amend the recovery plan as additional watershed-scale plans are completed by other entities over time

Prior to the approval of any recovery plan, NMFS must provide notice and an opportunity for public comment.

Team Structure

The general function of the Recovery Team is to advise NMFS, draft elements of the plan, and develop recommendations, ultimately leading to NMFS publication of a draft recovery plan. NMFS is the decision maker for the recovery plan, and will modify the draft plan as necessary and appropriate to enable the agency to publish a final NMFS recovery plan. Team members are expected to share their scientific expertise and policy perspectives; actively participate in meetings; read meeting materials in advance of meetings; and write, review, and provide feedback of draft recovery plan sections, as needed. NMFS will draw on technical and policy expertise of members based on the needs of various plan sections and tools. Some tasks may require joint work by technical and policy team members, and some may require only technical

or policy team member participation. The Recovery Team may also draw on the expertise of individuals outside the formal team structure. Subcommittees or workgroups of the Recovery Team will be convened around specific tasks. These groups will report progress back to the broader Recovery Team and help integrate their work into Recovery Team products.

This approach is different than the approach used to develop prior Puget Sound salmon recovery plans, which convened separate technical and policy teams and invested substantially in facilitation and coordination services. By comparison, we propose to convene one Puget Sound steelhead recovery team composed of both policy and technical expertise, allowing for a leaner process.

In accordance with national policy, Recovery Team membership is based on the expertise and abilities needed to advance Puget Sound steelhead recovery and to achieve recovery goals. The Recovery Team shall consist of members as specified from each entity or category below. Representatives of the Recovery Team shall have appropriate expertise in:

- science and conservation of Puget Sound steelhead,
- fisheries management,
- habitat protection,
- habitat restoration,
- freshwater and marine survival,
- quantitative analysis, or
- recovery planning and implementation.

The Recovery Team shall also be represented by key recovery partners that are currently engaged in recovery planning for Puget Sound steelhead, including the:

- Western Washington Treaty Tribes,
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife,
- Puget Sound Partnership and Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council,
- members from the Puget Sound Recovery Implementation Technical Team, and
- members from the prior Puget Sound Steelhead Technical Recovery Team.

Recovery Team Leader, Team Liaison, and Other Key Roles

NMFS has appointed a Recovery Team Leader, Elizabeth Babcock, whose general responsibilities will include: 1) leading and facilitating each Recovery Team meeting; 2) assigning projects (as necessary); 3) ensuring that all members of the team are participating as appropriate to ensure steady progress; 4) reviewing the draft and final recovery plan; and 5) overseeing public review of the draft recovery plan.

NMFS has appointed a NMFS Liaison, Alison Agness, to the Recovery Team. The Liaison coordinates Recovery Team activities such as: 1) defining team functions and establishing schedules for completing products (with team input and discussion); 2) coordinating with the Recovery Team Leader and the team members; 3) organizing and scheduling team meetings; 3) conducting literature reviews, providing technical input on recovery plan issues, and drafting recovery plan and watershed template sections, as needed, 4) overseeing team and meeting logistics; 5) coordinating NMFS internal meetings, dialogue, and input (i.e., of the Internal

Coordination Team) regarding Recovery Team activities; and 6) compiling the individual parts of the draft plan into a comprehensive recovery plan. The NMFS Liaison will work closely with the Team Leader on all aspects of the recovery planning process.

Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife have offered to support development of the Puget Sound Steelhead Recovery Plan and support outreach to ensure the tribes and appropriate stakeholders are engaged as needed throughout the recovery planning process. The co-managers will commit technical and policy staff to the Recovery Team to assist in development and writing of the plan, and co-manager executive level staff will also engage, as needed. Key roles for co-managers include development of recovery goals, objectives, and recovery planning tools.

The Puget Sound Partnership offered to support development of the Puget Sound Steelhead Recovery Plan and support outreach to watershed lead entities and the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council (Recovery Council) to ensure they are engaged as needed throughout the recovery planning process. The Recovery Council may help secure funding to support the planning process in coordination with the Recovery Team's work plan. The Puget Sound Partnership offered to provide policy and coordination staff for the Recovery Team to assist in development and writing of the plan, and Partnership executive level staff may also engage, as needed. A core team of Recovery Council members will participate as Recovery Team members to advise the Recovery Team and ensure coordination with other Puget Sound recovery plans.

Team Meetings

We anticipate that the Recovery Team or its subcommittees will meet every three or four weeks starting in spring of 2014 (see timeline below). During the initial meeting the NMFS Liaison and Recovery Team Leader will meet with the Recovery Team to discuss the recovery planning process, review the Terms of Reference, discuss future meetings, and start discussions about the status and needs of Puget Sound steelhead.

Prior to each meeting the NMFS Team Leader and Liaison will work with Recovery Team members to prepare or will themselves prepare topic papers, draft sections, or outlines of proposed approaches to specific components of the recovery plan. In most instances these materials will be sent in advance to the Recovery Team. The Recovery Team will then provide review and comment opportunities to further develop that portion of the recovery plan. Team members are not expected to initiate development of these materials, but are welcome to do so with the agreement of the Team Leader. Most meetings will have a conference call/go to meeting option. We understand that team members may not be able to attend every meeting, and ask that members provide comments on the meeting materials prior to meetings they cannot attend.

Recommendations and Conflict Resolution

Whenever possible, recommendations from the Recovery Team to the RA will be made through a consensus approach. If the Recovery Team members cannot reach consensus, the Recovery Team Leader may initiate a vote to arrive at a team recommendation based upon majority rule; however, this approach is not preferred and will be used judiciously. Dissenting positions will be recorded, maintained on file, and documented in the recovery plan. Through the proposed planning process and in accordance with the Terms of Reference, the Recovery Team Leader and the NMFS Liaison will work to ensure that the interests of all Recovery Team members are fairly represented and that different perspectives are respected.

Duration of Service & Recovery Plan Timeline

We will convene the Recovery Team for the specific purpose of preparing a draft recovery plan. It is our intent to have a draft recovery plan available for public review by the third quarter of 2016, and a final recovery plan completed by the fourth quarter of 2017. Therefore, the duration of service for participants will be approximately four years. Although the Recovery Team will be convened for this period, it should be noted that NMFS may disband, expand, or change the composition of the team.

2014

- Spring: First meeting of Recovery Team
- Spring-December: Recovery Team or its subcommittees meets every 3 or 4 weeks

2015

- January-December: Recovery Team or its subcommittees meets every 3 or 4 weeks

2016

- January-June: Recovery Team or its subcommittees meets every 3 or 4 weeks
- July- September: Draft recovery plan out for 90 day public review and hold public meetings during the comment period
- October- November: Compile and review public comments
- December: Recovery Team reconvenes to revise plan based on public comments, meeting frequency to be determined

2017

- January- June: Recovery Team continues to revise plan based on public comments, meeting frequency to be determined
- July-August: NMFS releases final recovery plan
- August and beyond: amend the final recovery plan as watershed-level plans are complete, as needed

NMFS Oversight

The RA will oversee the Recovery Team by: 1) convening and, if and when appropriate, disbanding or restructuring the Recovery Team; 2) appointing, replacing, and, if needed, removing individual team members; 3) defining the team's operating procedures (through these Terms of Reference); 4) approving recovery plan updates, revisions, or any other official recovery documents; and 5) identifying questions and issues that need the team's consideration.

NMFS will provide administrative support, such as photocopying, procurement of supplies, and expenses related to printing and distributing materials. In addition, NMFS may contract for services to the Recovery Team or to outside experts for specific products or to facilitate the drafting and assembling of the recovery plan or other documents for the team's use. Once submitted to NMFS, the draft recovery plan is subject to change, and may be wholly or only

partially adopted. The final recovery plan will be a federal government document and will explicitly acknowledge the Recovery Team's role in its preparation.

Communications

Lines of communication between the Recovery Team and NMFS are direct and will be conducted between the Recovery Team Leader and the RA. It is the responsibility of the Recovery Team Leader to facilitate open and constructive discussion of ideas and information. The NMFS Liaison will prepare meeting summaries of each team meeting. When differences of opinion occur, the summaries will include both the majority and minority opinion(s). Any official NMFS letters to the team will be directed to the Team Leader, who will then disseminate them to team members.

Terms of Service

All Recovery Team members serve in an advisory capacity to the RA. The Recovery Team is a forum in which to discuss opinions regarding measures necessary to recover Puget Sound steelhead. All team members must be committed to working together towards developing the recovery plan.