

**PUGET SOUND RECREATIONAL FISHERY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING**

JUNE 4, 2008

NMFS
Manchester, WA

After a very informative tour of the facilities, the meeting was called to order.

ATTENDANCE: Clint Muns, Rich Eltrich, Steve Thiesfeld, Greg Bargmann, Jim Jenkins, David Croonquist, Walt Dickhoff, Jon Lee, Ken Masee, Denis Popochock, Jason Rothermel, Brian Johnson, Polly Fischer, Mike Racine via telephone, and Colleen Desselle.

Agenda accepted as written except Dave asked for Rockfish Conservation Plan development.

Last meeting's minutes approved.

Committee Reports

Budget Report

\$185K under spent as of July 1, 2007. Spending less than planned. However, we are right on schedule. Contaminant monitoring error. Will add an extra \$1K.

Soos Creek is \$27K over budget. Not explained to Greg. Will not go over final budget. Food prices are up. Rich Eltrich stated that a lot of feed is ordered then balanced out later. Not sure this is the situation, but is how it happens in his experience.

In March 2008 we were broke with \$58K in the hole. Now we are in the black on the right path. April-June are good revenue months. Financially, we should be okay. Revenue this year looks better than in recent years.

Revenue- our revenue comes from a portion of recreational fishing license sales. The amount varies by license type and is applied only to people who fish in Puget Sound or Lake Washington during the license year (April to March). Some people can buy a license, but not fish in Puget Sound or Puget Sound. Not all fishing in Lake Washington counts toward our fund. Telephone surveys are completed to see if fished in PS or Lake Washington. This is a legislative mandate. Greg will send out to committee for discussion at next meeting. Second step – might it be worth exploring with licensing program adding a checkbox as to whether they anticipate fishing in Puget Sound? Phone surveys cost about \$20K and we pay 1/3 of the costs.

Shore Access - Greg for Kevin Ryan. Developing a boat ramp. Kevin is working hard at it with a list of potential access sites.

Lingcod Culture – Jon Lee

Presented slides from 12 dives and 21 collections. Collected 30 egg masses. Wide range of dates and locations from Seattle down through south Puget Sound. Partial collections.

Survival out of 30 egg masses - lingcod surviving 21,790. Egg masses 20 (surviving individuals). Two-thirds of egg masses are represented.

What stage does mortality occur? Collection to hatch March/April - died before hatching, 2 of 5 survived. Not good looking eggs. Collected from deep inside armor rock. Not a lot of current. May not have been getting enough current. Is this a site issue? Is this a timing (season) issue? No other collections were done from west Seattle. Hatching to present – from Jan/Feb 5 of 11 died. Natural occurrence? Possibly poor food quality. Need to check fertilization rate. Still unsure of causes and, hopefully, we can focus on this next year as a check reference. This has happened over time, not as a mass. None of this particular group survived. Believe this was a nutritional hurdle. Twenty surviving masses totaling 21,790 larvae. Trying to learn why there are more larvae than others. Collection dates? Size of males? Cultural environment? Need to do an analysis on survival by month. No data to check baseline as to what is naturally occurring. Are we helping or hindering what happens in nature? Believe we are obtaining more than what would normally happen (significantly). There is some data that cannot be explained. One mass was separated but treated the same, but we had wide variations in survival.

Goal – maximum egg mass represented. Refine methods for future six years of rearing – culture methods – nutrition tank, net pens. Reduce cannibalism. Size disparities. Minimize vulnerability. Visually break up the pen. Could it have impact on them when released? Hopefully reducing will be more like what is occurring in nature.

Difficult to rear through the larval stage. Will these fish be exposed to more currents and tidal changes? Can they cope after having been raised in such relatively quiet tanks? When released from bags into net pens, they are exposed to these conditions. We are still learning their parameters.

Size sorting and weaning

Hatchery Size Sort	Sub-yearling	Yearling
60-90 days post hatch on through 400 days	Release 200 days	Release 400 days

Release at ? (sorry, didn't catch this name). Not sure of second release site. Use of acoustic receivers. Brian stated there is good data and cutting edge stuff. How do we sit on the plan to make this all good to go? Draft is out today. Hoping to get out to broader group next week. Good hypotheses. Acoustic tags detect depth and live fish criteria so they know whether the fish is moving. ID the location to determine whether the fish is still alive. Can detect movement.

Legislative Affairs.

There is nothing to report. Should have some information at next meeting.

Old Business

Chinook Culture – Rich Eltrich – All releases went well in Tumwater. Hoodspout lost a lot due to flood. 14K last released, some with tags. Tumwater Falls released went well.

Jenkins and Rothermel - Pretty much where we want to be. Tribe planted. We are releasing the last of the sub-yearlings tonight. Garrison Springs into Chambers Bay. Chambers Creek up about ½ mile. We bring them to the facility at barrier dam and hold them a couple of weeks, then at night let go; most birds not aware of this type of release. Success is based on when released, technique of release, and how reared. HSRG has recommended an acclimation facility. First group is imprinted. No capacity to hold 17K fish. So partial hold of 24-48 hours and then into estuary. Would be ideal to have pond large enough to hold all and then release together. The marina program is allowing us to have jumbos for this release. Hoping we can work on it. Regarding homeowners that allow us on their property - perhaps a certificate, letter, memento, etc. can be given as appreciation for their efforts.

Upgrade for Chambers – Clint Muns – Can Greg check on this. Yes. Check to see if possible to use for more than just rearing fish.

Selective Fishery Reports – Rich Eltrich – These have a lot of information. Most are about PSRE fish. Clint stated that he recalled that we had to tag a huge amount of fish that were clipped. Rich stated that we should look at how the fish are distributed. Released a 50# - this information is interesting and we are getting CWT information before 5 years. Denis Popochock stated that because this is segregated, the argument is made that it has minimal impact as there are not native fish runs. The same goes for Deschutes. The agency has 90 facilities but we cannot maintain all the current facilities. HSRG funding is not there. Clint Muns stated that we should be able to ante up some funding for maintenance. Brian stated that Puyallup used to be great. Now a pittance. Should be able to upgrade Chambers. This is where it should be. Capitalize on it. There is 1.8 fish/pound. Fish loss is, hopefully, behind us now. Soos Creek is one. All have been tagged and was completed under budget.

There were 700K extra White river fish released this year at Minter. Not clipped. These make great recreational fish. Get Save Our Salmon on this. Need a long-term plan for excess fish. Would like to replace fall Chinook with spring Chinook if there are extras. We can create a huge egg bank. Could get 2M returning. Clint Muns wondered if low springers and depletion would be problematic. Denis asked how big is the ESU to work in. Other stocks do not affect Area 13. Minter is the best place because of the water temperature. Can you take stock from one area and start expanding in others for harvest? Self-imposed limit on White River as we don't know the carrying capacity there. So far it is looking good. Recovery is expensive due to cost for clipping, tagging, etc.

Samish and Glenwood Springs – the target was 600K fall. We received 590K eggs. 575K fish were released. May got a spurt of growth.

Icy Creek – 300K; 298K released. Looks good.

Soos Creek – 600K released. 2.3M target goal.

Clint Muns stated the general concept has a fine balance between yearlings and zeros. Too much of yearling hampered egg take returns. Greg stated the goal is to get Samish back. We put tags on them. Want to see how well we met the goal.

Status Report on Audit – Greg Bargmann – State Auditors Office did not make several deadlines. Working on language in audit... New deadline is in late summer. Preliminary audit report made but not distributed. Clint stated we should see it before it is massaged by the state auditors. Need to re-evaluate the findings. The department should get the auditors to provide a press release stating that it is not yet available. It is felt that the original report should be released as written by the private auditor. Contact Sontagg? If simple clarity of language, why is it taking so long? Controversial? Cannot release because of controversial issues? Suspicion of conspiracy? Clint will attempt to contact Auditor's Office. They should at least release a statement.

Development of Acoustical Tags – Greg Bargmann – Hoodspport tagged Chinook as they were released. PSRE bought 33 acoustical tags and we tagged a total of 57 fish. There were two immediate mortalities. Two days of mobile tracking by Josh Chamberlain. Found a whole bunch of tagged fish on May 8. On May 21 found four of them north of Hoodspport, between there and Lilliwaup. There were none on the east side of the canal or south of Hoodspport. It is looking good. Tags have life expectancy of 100 days. We should know information by the next meeting. Receivers on other side, so if they leave the area we will know the time of the occurrence.

Tagging – investigate acoustic tag in south Puget Sound. Checked to see coho in very poor shape. Wild expected to be extinct in about 50 years. Three years of tagging have reports, but no compilation. Go out of the Sound and die or before? Hoping to get with them so we can work on tagging program for spring 2009 at Minter Creek or Puget Sound. Normal coho and delayed release. Where they really go in the first 100 days. Work with the tribe.

Coho Production – Denis Popochock – Have two groups – regular and delayed. Larger in size increase numbers of delayed release would not cost much more. One quarter million have been done for about a decade. Would like to increase the numbers. There are issues with competition. May reduce overall size and production of south Puget Sound fish. Add acoustical tags. Where are they contributing is worth a try. Do it for a while. Coho is not a strong angler preference. South Sound – 3-5% used to be 11-12% overall contribution to fisheries. Clint Muns stated because of low numbers catch rate is in the tank. Angler catch increases with numbers.

Coho Summit for South Sound Coho – Rich Eltrich – They are looking at ways to bring back wild stocks. Steve stated there was considerable discussion on comprehensive coho participation; tribes don't want this. Probably not happening soon. Clint Muns stated that it is premature to commit funding for this. Area 10 has been very good the last year. Tags checked for where they are from. Need to analyze data on these coho. Need to have funding to take care of analysis of the data. Steve Thiesfeld will try to get some analyses on these. Once approved, it is just a matter of holding fish longer and feeding them a little longer. Hopefully, this is not a

problem with the tribes. In favor of modification of release. End of April or May is the normal release. Would try to hold to July. Hard to get volunteer groups because there are so many different things that have to happen – mow lawns, pump ponds, etc. Need trained staff to handle the various tasks. Note for Steve: The pinks have been clipped. Greg gets the sense that higher up can okay then we can go ahead. Requested by PSRE.

Long-Term Strategic Plan – Greg does not think anything has been done. Need to set a workshop to get this done. There are a lot of ideas. Report back in September when to do this, sometime between September and the end of December. Set aside a few hours to do this.

Other Matters

Rockfish Conservation Plan – Starting process to recover rockfish populations. Last week asked for ideas. Draft draft in September. Present to Commission in April or summer 2009. Fisheries to take effect May 2010. It is clear there is low abundance and fishing is the cause. Do we need to curtail fishing even more? Large numbers are affected by salmon fisheries. Catch-and-release not viable. Thinks of ways to release mortalities such as gear restrictions or hook size. MPA for rockfish? This is scary. Could preclude all salmon or mooching? Depth restrictions? Watch out for environmentalists with money that impose restrictions have shut out prime fishing areas without good data to back it up. There are a number of issues to talk about in the agency. Concerned that salmon fisheries are fisheries of concern. Need to know if bottomfish or recreational salmon are the cause. What are you fishing for? Spear fishing closed. Did they go for salmon and change to bottomfish? Need more data before draft can be created. Need to slow the process down. There is not an outright opposition to MPAs. Need science to back it up. Need to know what has improved. What is it doing? Do we need to compromise with trolling? If appropriate perhaps a compromise can be made. How to protect? How to release without mortality? Need public education. Need to be released before hitting service. Add zero retention? Helps focus education. David Croonquist would like to see scientific data on how many incidental catches there are. Possession Bar is probably an area where it happens. By and large, probably bottom fishers. Possibly there are anglers that state they are going “salmon” fishing and then switch to bottom fishing. Enforcement issue.

Enforcement Advisory Committee – David Croonquist – Will be attending. Let him know if anything to take to them.

Possession Limit – Need to revisit the definition – perhaps make it what an angler can keep at home. Suggest halibut tag. Need clarification and consistency.

Next meeting is to be held on Wednesday, September 3. The location in the Olympia area is to be announced.

Adjourned 9:00 p.m.