

**WRIA 1 SALMON RECOVERY PLAN DEVELOPMENT  
STAKEHOLDER GROUP  
MEETING SUMMARY**

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Date: November 20, 2003  
Time: 7:00 p.m. – 9:11 p.m.  
Place: 2nd Floor Conference Room, Whatcom County Public Works  
322 N. Commercial Street, Bellingham, WA

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**AGENDA**

1.	Welcome
2.	Introductions
3.	Approve meeting summary from October 29, 2003
4.	Technical Foundation : Harvest and Hatchery Management in WRIA 1
5.	Community Issues : Questions/Dialogue <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify Community values, issues and concerns related to habitat.</li><li>2. Identify areas, actions project type and projects related to habitat that have community support.</li><li>3. Identify where it will be necessary to build community support for habitat projects.</li></ol>
6.	Meeting Feedback Form

**MEETING ATTENDANCE**

Stakeholder Group members

Leo Bodensteiner, Western Washington University  
George Boggs, Whatcom Conservation District  
John Gillies, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Dale Griggs, Citizen  
Mark Henderson, Department of Ecology  
Chip Hilarides, Georgia-Pacific  
Hugh Lewis, Washington Trout  
Scott McCreery, Whatcom County Marine Resources Committee  
Fred Polinder, Ag/FCZD CAC  
Skip Richards, Non-Government Water Systems Caucus  
Todd Rightmire, Trout Unlimited  
Rebecca Schlotterback, PUD #1 of Whatcom County  
Mike Stoner, Port of Bellingham  
Vern VandeGarde, Bertrand CIDMP

Member of Public/Alternate

Randy Kinley, Lummi Nation  
Shannon Moore, Washington Salmon Commodities Commission

Members Absent

Henry Bierlink, Agriculture Caucus  
Jeremy Brown, Washington Trollers  
Mary Dickinson, Land Development Caucus  
Kristin Fredericks, Washington State Department of Transportation  
Richard Haard, Salmon Habitat Citizens Advisory Committee  
Jim Hansen, Salmon Habitat Citizen Advisory Committee

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David Hooper, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association  
Jim Jorgensen, Puget Sound Anglers  
Joe Kelly, Fourth Corner Fly Fishers  
Kristian Warfel, Puget Sound Gillnetters, Washington Salmon Commodities Commission  
Bert Webber, Salmon Habitat Citizens Advisory Committee  
Richard Whitmore, Forestry Caucus

Guests

Alan Chapman, Lummi Natural Resources  
Curt Kraemer, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife  
Steve Seymour, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Staff and Contractors

Ned Currence, Nooksack Natural Resources  
Lisa Kaufman, Whatcom County Water Resources  
Anne Krancus, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Assoc  
Wendy Scherrer, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Assoc  
John Thompson, Whatcom County Water Resources

**DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED**

- Agenda for November 20, 2003 Meeting
- Stakeholder Group Meeting Summary from October 29, 2003
- Steering Committee Meeting Summary from October 8, 2003
- Stakeholders Group 10.29.2003 Meeting Follow-Up

**MEETING SUMMARY:**

**Welcome**

Wendy Scherrer welcomed the Stakeholder Group and set the agenda for the evening.

**Introductions**

Introductions were made by the 24 participants.

**Approve Meeting Summary from October 29, 2003**

The Contractor inquired as to if everyone accepted the meeting summary from the Stakeholder Group meeting held on October 29, 2003.

There were no changes made to the summary by members of the group.

**Technical Foundation : Harvest and Hatchery Management in WRIA 1**

Curt Kraemer from the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife presented on harvest management in WRIA 1; please refer to the attached PowerPoint presentation titled, ***Why is Harvest Important ?*** for a summary of Kraemer's presentation.

Alan Chapman from Lummi Natural Resources presented on hatchery management in WRIA 1; please refer to the attached PowerPoint presentation titled, ***Puget Sound Hatchery Programs***, for a summary of Chapman's presentation.

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**Community Issues: Questions/Dialogue**

- Following Kraemer's presentation the floor was opened for questions and discussion.

The key message from Kraemer's presentation was that harvest is important regionally, culturally, and economically. Salmon are inherently productive; when stocks are healthy they could support harvest. A rebuilt habitat productivity and capacity could render a maximum 60% harvest if the stock is fully recovered.

A member of the group commented that the management of harvest could possibly already be too high, and is it possible to put the low abundance threshold to zero? Kraemer responded that low abundance thresholds safeguard against extremely low numbers of spawners, which could lead to population instability. When there are low abundance thresholds, this triggers maximum fishery restrictions. The general salmon fisheries have already been cut by half to protect weak stocks and increase adult escapement for spawning. However, salmon populations, such as the early North Fork Chinook cannot maintain themselves if only 0.2 to 0.3 adults return to the river for each adult that had spawned four years previously. It was his opinion that harvest has already giving up a lot in order to conserve weak salmon stocks and that habitat is the primary limitation now. For the Nooksack, salmon populations represent current habitat productivity and capacity, and salmon populations will change as habitat improves or degrades. It is possible that emphasis put towards bettering habitat conditions could increase salmon population numbers.

A member of the group inquired as to the egg to fry survival rate in our system. Kraemer responded that there is a wide variance, with wide swings, noted in smolt trapping. The watershed does not have the capacity that it did historically; the water in the system runs off more quickly. This increases scour rate, which drastically impacts egg to fry survival. A member of the group commented that if upper watershed practices were changed, i.e. forest harvest, this could significantly impact fish in the river, and could be good in the lowlands.

A member of the group stated that the reality of the situation is that we need to get back to good productivity; this could result from recovering our habitat. The simple answer is not cutting back harvest, more. Historically, fish rebounded quickly; two salmon could have a return of 30 to 40 fish. Currently, two fish have a return rate of one to two. This is slow productivity; we need to get back to good, high productivity.

A member of the group wanted to know if there is capacity in our watershed for the type of spawning that needs to occur in order to get salmon back to harvestable levels. Kraemer answered that there is not. Currence stated that degraded habitat is a capacity limitation and that the numbers of fish not coming back reflect this. Chapman stated that six years worth of data show that for every two fish that spawn, only one is coming back for the North Fork early chinook.

- Following Chapman's presentation the floor was opened for questions and discussion.

A member of the group wanted to know if the "tagging" of fish was the same in all rivers throughout Washington State. Chapman responded that there is fin clipping of all hatchery/artificial fish, but not all fish are coded-wire-tagged or the otolith marked in the hatchery setting. The same member inquired as to the genetic risk, or 'swamping', that could occur between large numbers of fall chinook spawning over (both physically and possibly

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creating hybrids) the native spring chinook; and, if there are in fact any spring chinook left in our watershed. Chapman responded that there is no definitive answer at this time for the member's questions.

A member of the group presented the Stakeholder Group with Washington Trout's, **Comments Submitted to NOAA Fisheries Re: HGMP for Kendall Creek Coho Program.**

A member of the group commented that he/she does not agree that hatcheries are the problem, or that harvest is the problem. The group needs to prioritize what needs to be protected, and because there is new information all the time, we need to take all the information into consideration. Something needs to be done about our habitat and it's capacity, at the current time, there is not the capacity for the amount of salmon that is needed to harvest, and hatcheries might not be the only answer.

A member of the group inquired as to why "mitigation" hatcheries were introduced into the picture historically. Chapman responded that the majority of hatchery programs are the result of mitigation to replace fish and fishing opportunities lost as a result of "socially acceptable" habitat alterations (including dams and urbanization). This occurred because the problems can be identified, however, the technology, or know-how, to fix the problem is not available. Therefore, some hatcheries were used as mitigation, and as early as 1895 the first hatchery was established in the Nooksack basin.

A member of the group asked the status of the South Fork Nooksack. Currence responded that based on the data currently analyzed there are fewer wild spawners in the North Fork than the South Fork on the average. He noted that the smolt trap data from both the South Fork and the Mainstem at Hovander Park indicate that relatively large numbers of Green River origin (fall chinook) are coming out of the South, North Fork and Mainstem of the Nooksack and that these fish are genetically distinct from the native early (spring) chinook. The reason for the genetic differences in the chinook stocks is that they are a product of their environment, and that they change along with environmental dynamics such as temperature. This may be an important factor to consider in recovery planning as there are ecological niches that have been historically filled in the Nooksack and that the current dynamics of the chinook stocks in the South Fork may reflect both management and environmental change.

A member of the group stated: 1) we do not have self-sustaining salmon runs to support fisheries, 2) hatcheries are pretty much just a life raft, and 3) habitat is the answer to a majority of our capacity issues regarding salmon. Habitat takes a long time to fix. Chapman responded with the notion that there are different time scales for all of the four H's (hatchery, harvest, habitat, and hydro). Habitat responds to changes made in 25, to 50, to 100 years; hatcheries can make changes rather quickly, approximately five years; and, harvest can be the most responsive, one year.

A group member was adamant that a statement should be put within the Salmonid Recovery Plan stating that not all participants of the group support or endorse the plan for WRIA 1. He/she stated that because the entire document of the WRIA 1 Salmonid Recovery Plan is not going to be seen prior to going out, he/she would feel more comfortable if this was said somewhere in the group's proceedings.

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**Meeting Feedback Form**

A Meeting Follow-Up form was distributed at the beginning of the meeting.

**Next Meeting Date and Agenda**

December 18, 2003 will be the next Stakeholder Group meeting. The focus will be on Actions. The Contractor would like all members to bring their questions and issues regarding the WRIA 1 Salmonid Recovery Plan to discuss at this meeting.

**SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:**

- The Meeting Follow-Up form answers will be compiled for all group members.
- The web site will be updated with information regarding the meetings being held by groups involved in the recovery planning for WRIA 1.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 9:11 p.m.