



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE

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TO: SRFB Members and Designees
FROM: Laura Johnson, Director 
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SUBJECT: Governor's Forum on Monitoring Update

Structure Change

As of July 2007, the new legislation creating a forum on monitoring watershed health and salmon recovery is in effect. The new law adopts the "*The Washington Comprehensive Monitoring Strategy and Action Plan for Watershed Health and Salmon Recovery*", and requires the FORUM to provide guidance to ensure that the coordination activities directed by executive order 04-03 are effectively carried out. The governor now appoints the chair, and state agency participants are identified in the law. Among those named is the Salmon Recovery Funding Board. The SRFB will need to decide who will represent them at the FORUM. The law also specifically names all of the salmon recovery regions as participants at the FORUM. In the past only one representative was present.

Most of the tasks identified in legislation are similar to those previously named in the executive order. One specific change that will affect SRFB operations (and other agencies) is the requirement that the FORUM must make:

"...recommendations to the office of financial management and the appropriate legislative committees on agency budget requests related to monitoring salmon recovery and watershed health. These recommendations must be made no later than September 15th of each year. The goal of this review is to prioritize and integrate budget requests across agencies".

FORUM Workshop On Streamlining Data

On June 20, 2007, the FORUM held a workshop at the SeaTac Marriott on improving data storage and reporting for the *State of Salmon Report*. Approximately 100



individuals signed up for the workshop, which was intended to mix policy and technical agency representatives together in a problem-solving arena.

Topics covered included: water quality, water quantity, juvenile salmon migrants, Adult escapement, harvest, and database sharing and reporting issues at the local government and regional level.

Top recommendations to the FORUM from the workshop breakout groups were as follows:

Harvest-Related Monitoring

Harvest is monitored coastwide from California to Alaska and requires coordination between many jurisdictions. Current harvest estimates for populations within Washington are based upon stock conglomerates developed from recovery of tags placed in hatchery-reared fish released from various rivers in Washington and elsewhere. The current need to monitor primary populations of natural-wild salmon was not a consideration when harvest monitoring systems were originally developed. Harvest monitoring does not necessarily coincide with the current stock conglomerates such as "ESUs", and tagged hatchery salmon may not represent the true contribution of wild salmon to the various commercial and sport fisheries coastwide.

Workshop participants recommended to the FORUM that they:

1. Improve organization of harvest management information at the ESU/population scale, with an emphasis on wild fish,
2. Identify gaps and limitations in existing coastwide databases, and
3. Provide policy-level support for requiring standardized data collection and reporting – linked to funding. (Consider formalizing data transfer and sharing agreements between agencies and salmon recovery regional organizations.)

Juvenile Migrants

There are numerous tribes, Washington DFW, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and public utilities monitoring juvenile migrant abundances. Currently it is difficult to obtain standardized migrant data statewide and in a consistent manner that can be used to report to the public and to decision makers whether freshwater salmon and steelhead productivity has improved.

Workshop participants recommended to the FORUM that the agencies monitoring juvenile migrants:

1. Continue and increase the level of active communication to improve coordination among them.
2. Form a broad working group to:

- a. Recommend to the FORUM for adoption business practices and data dictionary/protocols (but don't recreate the wheel).
 - b. Formalize relationships between policy questions (i.e., State of Salmon report) and data needed to address those questions. (Align with NOAA VSP parameters/limiting factors.)
 - c. Identify data gaps and where, who, how, when data are currently being summarized and reported.
 - d. Consider development of data templates, incentives, data sharing agreements, juvenile and adult framework.
3. Pursue implementation resources.

Water Quality

Water quality monitoring occurs at all levels of government based upon Clean Water Act (NPDES) requirements and/or the need to conduct some specific ambient monitoring. None of the current monitoring can provide watershed-scale status or trends in water quality improvements. Data collected by local governments for Clean Water requirements are not included in statewide databases for water quality.

Workshop participants recommended to the FORUM concerning monitoring water quality that:

1. The FORUM and lead agencies should provide leadership in coordinated water quality data sharing
2. The FORUM should take an active role in encouraging data coordination.
3. A formalized line of communications amongst all levels of government be organized to:
 - a. Bring natural resource leadership together on a regular basis (2 years)
 - i. Commit to a plan
 - ii. Coordinate with regional entities
4. Need Common Hydrography Layer scalable from local to state scale
 - b. Establish Standards and Protocols
 - i. Tiered system to indicate skill of data collectors
 - ii. Recommend specific protocols for data collection
5. Database Needs
 - a. Don't establish a mega database
 - b. Create data portal that indexes available data bases and provides access to regional databases

- c. Encourage state agencies to provide data infrastructure for small groups that cannot develop their own database

Water quantity

Workshop participants recommended to the FORUM concerning monitoring water quantity to:

1. Create a team to identify sources of flow data and map to GIS for easy location of gauges,
2. Recommend strategy for deploying gauges in gap areas, including examination of first order and ephemeral streams,
3. Develop refined hydrologic model that helps direct gauge deployment,
4. Specify data needed for determining normative flows regime,
5. Recommend methods for USGS and ECY to disseminate information on data quality from gauges, and
6. Seek funding for flow data collection at WRIA scale.

Regional Data issues

Currently the salmon recovery regions are in various stages of storing and reporting data from regional salmon recovery efforts. They have asked the FORUM to:

1. Help regions understand data needs; develop templates; help with infrastructure,
2. Advocate for funding, and
3. Work closely with regions to use recovery plans to identify critical gaps, develop budget request, and seek funding.

Next Steps

The FORUM will convene on September 11 to review OFM budget requests involving monitoring or databases. It will be introducing its chair and determining the FORUM relationships to the Puget Sound Partnership.