

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PUGET SOUND AND COASTAL WASHINGTON HATCHERY REFORM PROJECT

What is the Hatchery Reform Project?

The Hatchery Reform Project is the first effort to evaluate and manage the salmon and steelhead hatcheries in the Puget Sound and coastal areas as a *system*, with the goals of supporting sustainable fisheries and helping to restore naturally spawning salmon. This reform will include approximately 100 hatcheries that produce more than 100 million juvenile salmonids a year, supporting fisheries upon which sport and tribal fishermen depend. It will help ensure hatcheries do not present risks to threatened wild salmon, but instead provide benefits to the recovery process.

Who is involved in the Hatchery Reform Project?

The Hatchery Reform Project was created by Congress in 2000, and is supported by Governor Gary Locke, Senator Patty Murray, Representative Norm Dicks, Representative Jennifer Dunn and former U.S. Senator Slade Gorton. The project brings together a panel of independent scientists, a committee of federal, state and tribal decision-makers for the hatchery system in Puget Sound and coastal Washington, the regional managers of these hatcheries, and Long Live the Kings, a third-party facilitator appointed by Congress to manage and facilitate the project. This collaborative, science-based approach has created a set of recommendations that have the support of independent scientists and the agencies who will implement the reforms.

How were the recommendations formed?

These reforms are the result of a comprehensive, two-year process, led by a group of scientists in partnership with the state, the tribes and the federal agencies

responsible for fisheries management in the region. Since March of 2000, the group of scientists has spent more than 1,000 hours per member crafting a scientific framework and regional review process and developing their recommendations. The scientific framework that the Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) used to develop the recommended reforms was sent for public review to more than 200 scientists, legislators, conservationists and other stakeholders, and revised based on their feedback.

How long will the project take?

The recommendations being released on February 19th cover the first three of ten regions that will be reviewed over the next two years. Using the scientific framework and assessment tools, the HSRG will examine and review four more regions in 2002 and the remaining three regions in 2003. The state and tribes are committed to following through with the reforms and have, in fact, already begun implementation of early reforms. It will take several years to implement all the recommended reforms.

How many hatcheries will be affected by this project?

The project will affect approximately 100 hatchery facilities in Puget Sound and coastal Washington state. These hatcheries produce more than 100 million juvenile salmon and steelhead a year, but have never been systematically evaluated and managed to help restore naturally spawning populations and support sustainable fisheries.

How does hatchery reform help threatened salmon?

The 100 hatcheries being reviewed by the Hatchery Reform Project produce more than 100 million juvenile salmon and steelhead every year, helping to meet tribal treaty harvest obligations and maintain the commercial and sports fishing economies. By implementing these reforms, the managers will go beyond simply complying with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) requirements to minimize the

risks from hatcheries and actually help restore naturally spawning salmon stocks. For the first time, hatcheries will be systematically evaluated and managed to reduce their impacts on naturally spawning salmon. In 1999, a group of leading scientists reported to Congress that hatchery reform could have a major positive impact on the recovery of naturally spawning salmon, in just a few years and at relatively small costs.

How much will this cost and where will the money come from?

Fully implementing the HSRG's recommendations will require a significant investment partnership. Through the Coordinating Committee, the managers will be presented with the recommendations for review, discussion and implementation. State support will be needed from the governor and Legislature. Congress and the federal executive branch will receive the recommendations developed through their funding and be asked to provide resources for implementation. Foundations, corporations and other private entities with a stake in salmon recovery and the Endangered Species Act—and a preference for results-oriented processes—will also be approached for implementation resources. The state and federal governments have already allotted money toward the project. So far, Congress has contributed \$12.6 million, while Governor Locke's proposed economic stimulus package calls for \$8 million that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will use to implement early hatchery reforms.

How will managing the hatcheries as a system help save money?

Washington state currently spends \$20 million a year on the Puget Sound and coastal hatchery projects. By managing the hatcheries as a system, we will save money by eliminating inefficiencies and programs that work at cross-purposes. The HSRG's scientific approach identifies hatchery programs' benefits and risks or costs. Already, the governor has used the Hatchery Reform Project's recommendations to

identify efficiencies and has proposed budget cuts accordingly. Federal funding to support federal and tribal hatcheries will also benefit from the efficiencies identified by the reform process.