

Meeting Date: December 2011
Title: Management Report, Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
Prepared By: Megan Duffy, Executive Coordinator
Approved by the Director:



Proposed Action: Briefing and Decision

Highlights of Recent Activities - GSRO

Science Coordinator Position

The Governor's Salmon Recovery Office (GSRO) has hired Keith Dublanica as its new science coordinator. Keith comes to GSRO from the Mason County Conservation District where he was a habitat biologist. Prior to the Conservation District, Keith worked with the Skokomish Indian Tribe for 14 years; he served as the Natural Resources Director for seven of those years. He has significant experience with salmon protection and restoration efforts, including tracking, monitoring, and adaptive management. His responsibilities within GSRO will include participation in the development of the State of the Salmon Report, tracking monitoring efforts, assessing data to measure progress in salmon recovery efforts, managing monitoring contracts, and translating data to inform policy discussions.

Salmon Recovery Information and Reporting Initiatives

GSRO is working with a team of lead entities, Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) staff, and system designers to improve the user experience and data quality within PRISM and Habitat Work Schedule. While several features of the PRISM/Habitat Work Schedule interface are up and running, there is a need to refine some of these features and to adjust both data flows and system user workflows.

GSRO also is meeting with the regional recovery organizations and several agencies to (1) gather and synthesize feedback about which data to report and how to report it, (2) define workplans, (3) develop web templates, and (4) create work teams for the 2012 State of the Salmon in Watersheds Report.

2010 Regional Performance Reviews

GSRO conducted annual performance reviews for all seven regional salmon recovery organizations in October and November 2011. These reviews (1) acknowledge recent major accomplishments; (2) identify obstacles or delays to key milestones; and (3) review expectations and milestones identified in current scope of work. GSRO will be preparing a summary of these reviews.

Steelhead Efforts in Puget Sound

GSRO is working closely with the Puget Sound Partnership to determine how to most effectively distribute the \$250,000 awarded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (board) for Steelhead Planning in Puget Sound. The Puget Sound Steelhead Technical Review Team (TRT) produced its draft Population Identification document at the end of October, and anticipates completing draft viability criteria by the end of 2011. Both of these documents will provide guidance in how to target the funds. Additionally, the Partnership will be convening a small group of experts to discuss — in light of recent marine studies, the TRT's work, and the WDFW Steelhead Action Plan (produced in response to a request by the Governor) — the most critical needs for steelhead. That work will provide direction on the best way to invest the \$250,000. GSRO will be closely involved with the Partnership in these efforts.

Update on Monitoring Funds from PCSRF, FFY 2011

Tetra Tech Effectiveness Monitoring - Decision

The Tetra Tech contract for the board's effectiveness monitoring program expires April 30, 2012. The board has provided funding for this program since 2004. The intent of the monitoring is to determine the efficacy of projects in achieving intended restoration, and for some categories, whether localized salmon and steelhead abundance has increased¹. The program, which was originally planned as a 12-year effort, is currently in its seventh year.

In order to begin effectively preparing for the 2012 field season, Tetra Tech will need to be under contract no later than March 1, 2012. As the board is not scheduled to meet until April 2012, staff is requesting that the board approve funding at this time. Staff will request that Tetra Tech provide a briefing to the board in April on the current status and findings of the program.

Proposed Motion Language

Move to approve \$287,000 for continuation of the board's Effectiveness Monitoring Program.

¹ A summary of the program and results from analyses of the monitoring data is available on the web at <http://www.rcowa.gov/documents/monitoring/2010Report.pdf>. Reports can also be found on the Habitat Work Schedule site.

Remaining FFY 2011 PCSRF Funds

GSRO is working with a group to determine the how best to allocate the remaining/unobligated 2011 Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Funds (PCSRF) dedicated to monitoring. This group includes representatives from the regional organizations, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), the Department of Ecology, and RCO staff. Potential monitoring projects presented to the group include:

1. Expand the current project effectiveness monitoring program to increase the number of floodplain enhancement and instream structure projects monitored. For this study, additional specifically selected (i.e., not randomly selected) project sites would be added to the current pool of effectiveness monitoring projects.
2. Evaluate opportunities to combine and analyze data generated by monitoring programs using different sampling protocols. There are currently several large data collection programs funded by public dollars (e.g., CHaMP, Ecology Status and Trends, UCSRB monitoring, etc.). The results of these programs could be "crosswalked," and disparate data may (or may not be able to) be integrated.
3. Identify existing estuarine and nearshore protocols, indicators, and metrics for the State of the Salmon Report and to inform restoration approaches. This effort would investigate available information, share that information with lead entities and regional organizations, and convene experts to recommend preferred nearshore protocols, indicators, and metrics.
4. Expand the 2010 pilot on high resolution change detection in salmon recovery regions. This effort would expand a successful pilot tested in Puget Sound in 2010 to use high-resolution aerial imagery to detect changes in land cover from 2006 to 2009. This project would look at a specific watershed in each of the remaining salmon recovery regions to detect transitions from forest land cover to human dominated land cover.
5. Develop an implementation monitoring pilot study to develop draft protocols and methodologies for comprehensive, standardized implementation monitoring. Implementation monitoring tracks the location, description, magnitude, quality, effect, and continued function through time of habitat restoration and protection projects. Results from implementation monitoring could assist in the evaluation and reporting of progress towards recovery goals by providing consistent, standard measures of project magnitude and quality, and would facilitate the long-term stewardship of restoration by monitoring the continued function of projects.

These proposals are consistent with the monitoring section of the 2011 PCSRF grant application and will be considered in light of project review criteria originally developed by

the Monitoring Forum. At the board's April meeting, staff will present the final recommended proposals and request approval to create and enter contracts to implement the recommended monitoring efforts.