



Northwest Regional Office

NOAA Fisheries

National Marine Fisheries Service



News
Release

*Federal Fisheries Agency Searching for
Scientists to Serve on Salmon Recovery Team*

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The National Marine Fisheries Service said today it has embarked on a search for scientists to serve on a technical recovery team to begin the crucial work restoring seven populations of salmon and steelhead in the interior Columbia Basin.

The team, expected to have between ten and 12 members, will develop goals and standards by which progress toward recovery can be measured. According to the fisheries service, these goals will also help the region's natural-resource managers carry out their own recovery efforts and watershed plans.

Eventually, the federal agency will produce recovery plans for all 26 Washington, Oregon, California and Idaho salmon and steelhead populations protected under the Endangered Species Act. There are already two other recovery teams in place, working on recovery standards for Puget Sound and for the Willamette and Lower Columbia river basins.

"This will be a formidable task," said Donna Darm, acting administrator for the fisheries services' Northwest region in Seattle. "But we're resolved to assemble a technical recovery team made up of the best experts we can find."

Darm said the team's products will also be helpful in evaluating the three-, five- and eight-year "check points" contained in the agency's 2000 biological opinion on the operation of the Columbia Basin hydropower system.

The agency said that recovery plans will be designed to provide a "road map" for improving the status of a protected species, so that it is no longer considered threatened or endangered and can be removed from the federal list. Moreover, the agency said, the plans will be comprehensive, touching on a wide variety of organizations and geographical systems.

"The whole process of salmon recovery ought to be broad and integrated into other natural-resource activities," said Darm. "And we're optimistic that the team's work can be harmonized into and built on existing efforts from the Northwest Power Planning Council, local watershed groups, the tribes and state agencies."

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The team members are expected to have direct experience working in the interior Columbia Basin and extensive knowledge of West Coast salmon biology and ecology. Their work is expected to begin in early September and take about two years to complete.

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