



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 24, 2007

Contact: Areaka McFadden, DOC
202-482-1526
Janet Sears, NOAA
206-526-6172

Federal Fisheries Service Endorses Locally Produced Recovery Plan for Hood Chum Salmon

SEATTLE -- Deputy Secretary of Commerce David A. Sampson said today that NOAA Fisheries Service was formally adopting a locally produced recovery plan for Hood Canal summer chum salmon, a fish that was given protection when it was listed as "threatened" under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1999. Sampson was in Seattle to tour NOAA's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory, and also announced the release of this final recovery plan.

"Stewardship of salmon is an investment in this state's economic vitality, businesses and jobs," Sampson said. "Such investment also contributes to this region's quality of life with clean water and productive ecosystems."

Recovery plans for listed fish are required by the ESA, and today's action marks only the second recovery plan that the agency has endorsed that encompasses the entire range of a listed Pacific salmon. NOAA Fisheries Service approved a final recovery for Puget Sound Chinook salmon early this year.

Recovery plans serve as guides for state, local and federal agencies and others on the steps that have to be taken to bring about full restoration of listed fish. Today's plan was a product of the Hood Canal Coordinating Council, a watershed-based, regional council of local governments that included county commissioners from Jefferson, Kitsap and Mason counties and elected tribal council members from the Skokomish and Port Gamble S'Klallam tribes.

Other groups, including volunteer, regional fisheries enhancement organizations, conservation districts and land trusts have also worked with the Hood Canal council on a variety of projects relating to chum salmon recovery.

"This plan is the product of remarkable cooperation among a range of diverse groups in the region, with one important thing in common," said Bob Lohn, head of the NOAA Fisheries Northwest regional office in Seattle. "Like us, they all want to see these fish come back to healthy numbers and they all want to see this recovery plan succeed."

The Hood Canal Chum Recovery Plan reflects what the President has called the spirit of "cooperative conservation," which is his initiative for local partnerships to achieve conservation goals.

-more-

Hood Canal summer chum declined significantly in the 1980s, and the recovery plan points to harvest and habitat degradation at the time as the main culprits.

Federal approval sets the region's course for bringing salmon back to healthy numbers and provides a cornerstone for recovery efforts. In addition to lasting measurable results for salmon, the plan's actions are also expected to provide important ecological benefits to the overall health of Hood Canal.

The plan includes objective, measurable standards that if met, could lead to the fish's being removed from the ESA list. The plan also includes specific management actions likely needed to achieve the plan's goals, and estimates that the first 10 years of implementation could cost approximately \$136 million. However, recovery could take significantly longer to achieve.

Recovery plans for threatened or endangered species are typically developed by a team of people, including federal agencies, academics, state agencies and industry. But according to Lohn, the agency's philosophy for salmon recovery plans throughout the region is that a cooperative approach that builds on local salmon recovery efforts will be far more effective.

Locally generated recovery plans for other listed salmon populations in the Northwest are expected later this year and next.

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation's living marine resources and their habitat through scientific research, management and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public. To learn more about NOAA Fisheries Service, please visit: www.nmfs.noaa.gov.

###

On the Web:

NOAA Fisheries Service: www.nmfs.noaa.gov

NOAA: www.noaa.gov