



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Northwest Fisheries Science Center
2725 Montlake Blvd. E.
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Southwest Fisheries Science Center
P.O. Box 271
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October 20, 1999

Dear Interested Parties:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is ready to begin recovery planning for Pacific salmon and steelhead evolutionarily significant units (ESUs) listed as threatened or endangered species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA). The scope of this recovery planning effort will encompass the more than twenty ESUs that have been listed over the past several years in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and California.

NMFS intends to establish a single Recovery Science Review Panel (Panel) to guide the scientific and technical aspects of recovery planning throughout this entire area and ensure that the recovery planning process adheres to the highest standards of scientific quality and integrity. The Panel will advise the NMFS' Northwest and Southwest Regions' Science Directors.

NMFS will also appoint Technical Recovery Teams for discrete geographic areas, or domains, beginning with teams for Puget Sound and the Willamette and Lower Columbia river basins in early 2000. These Technical Teams will establish delisting criteria and recovery goals for listed anadromous salmonid species within their domain. The Panel will review the processes and products of these Technical Teams for scientific credibility and to ensure consistent application of core principles.

On October 19, 1999, NMFS published a notice in the *Federal Register* soliciting nominations to the Recovery Science Review Panel (64 FR 56329). NMFS is seeking the most highly qualified individuals to serve on this Panel. Nominees should be scientists of international reputation and distinguished record in the fields of ecology, evolutionary biology, conservation biology, fisheries biology, or salmon biology; have held positions of scientific leadership; have demonstrated fairness and cooperation throughout their career; and meet National Research Council standards for independence and conflict of interest.

The *Federal Register* notice is enclosed. Also enclosed is a description of the proposed recovery planning process for West Coast salmonids that further explains the relationship of the Panel to the Technical Recovery Teams and describes the recovery planning domains. (The *Federal Register* notice and summary document are also available through the Internet at www.nwr.noaa.gov.)

We encourage all interested parties to make nominations to the Panel. Those in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho with specific questions regarding this notice should contact Beth Sanderson at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (206-860-3410). Those in California should contact Pete Adams at the Southwest Fisheries Science Center (415-435-3149).

Sincerely,

Usha Varanasi
Science Director
Northwest Fisheries Science Center

Michael Tillman
Science Director
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