United States Department of the Interior

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IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS/R1/AFR

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Memorandum

To: All Region 1 Fisheries Program Project Leaders

From: Assistant Regional Director, Fishery Resources
Portland, Oregon

Subject: Region1 Implementation Policy of Hatchery Review Recommendations

Please find attached the Region 1 Fisheries Program's policy for implementing hatchery reform. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines and expectations for implementing recommendations.

The attached policy guidance lays out the role of the Assistant Regional Director (ARD), Hatchery/Complex Managers (Project Leaders), Hatchery Evaluation Team (HET), and Line Supervisors. It outlines a prominent role for Project Leaders and the respective HET. Some recommendations will occur outside the realm of influence for Project Leaders, but this policy recognized their essential role in management oversight of reform implementation. The policy allows for recommendations to not be implemented but requires a detailed justification of the rationale behind such a request and full exploration of alternative strategies to accomplish the risk/benefit issues being managed. Alternative actions may be substituted or recommendations modified based on additional work by the HET or co-manager consultation. Recommendations which result in changes in program numbers, release sites, stock, or program benefits may require significant interagency coordination. This policy allows for that.

We will track our progress towards reform and identification of operational and infrastructure needs using the Fisheries Information System and Service Asset Maintenance Management System. It is expected this policy will help move the National Fish Hatchery System towards full implementation of hatchery reform principles within the Pacific Northwest .It is not my intent to create new work without purpose, but to ensure the successful implementation of reform actions. Much work has gone into the hatchery review process. We must now demonstrate progress in implementation of these reforms. These recommendations are designed to ensure we are operating under sound scientific principles and guidance and will help ensure that hatchery operations are part of comprehensive solutions to aquatic species conservation efforts along with well designed habitat conservation and fishery management programs. I appreciate your efforts toward those ends.

Attachment

R1 implementation policy of Hatchery Review Recommendations

In an effort to improve our hatchery programs, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is implementing a multi-year review of facilities it owns or operates in the Pacific Northwest. The goal of these reviews is to assure our hatcheries efficiently and effectively contribute to sustainable fisheries and/or protect and recover native spawning populations to sustainable levels by assuring our hatcheries are operated on the best scientific principles, follow the best management practices, and are guided by well thought-through, partner-agreed comprehensive plans. The outcomes of these reviews are the first of on-going region-wide efforts towards hatchery reform, such as the Western Washington and Columbia Basin's Hatchery Scientific Review Group and establishment of Best Management Hatchery Practices through the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion.

1. Nature of Recommendations

Individual hatchery review reports contain issues and specific recommendations to modify physical facilities, operational procedures, and/or evaluation activities to address identified risks or benefits. Reviews also contain recommended modifications to short-and long-term programs including possible modifications to stocks and/or production levels.

Recommendations are stated with justification and intended results. Where changes to short-and long-term production programs are recommended, the hatchery review reports contain alternatives and discussions of the benefits and risks of each alternative to assist implementers. Members of the hatchery review team (HRT) are also available to clarify recommendations as needed.

2. Roles of Assistant Regional Director, Fisheries Resources (ARD), hatchery/complex managers (project leaders), HET, and line supervisors

Implementation of report recommendations is the responsibility of the appropriate hatchery/complex manager (project leader) in consultation with the HET and co-managers and with oversight and support by line supervisors.

An implementation workplan is to be developed by the responsible project leader in close coordination with the HET. This plan should prioritize recommendations with approximate timelines for implementation. In areas of dispute within the HET or with co-managers, the HET will prepare an issue paper for submittal through line supervisors for resolution. The Service should resolve internal disagreements before meeting with co-managers.

It is the responsibility of the ARD, project leaders, and line supervisors to actively pursue implementation and funding to carry out needed hatchery reform measures. Annual progress towards implementing recommendations will be tracked through the implementation workplan and FIS (see number 8 below for details). Progress towards implementation will roll up under Regional and National goals through the Government Performance and Reports Act (GPRA) and Program Assessment and Rating Tool performance measures, such as "Percent of Management Plan Tasks Implemented."

3. Decision not to implement a recommendation
After consultation with the HET and co-managers, the Hatchery/Complex Manager may request that the ARD support a decision to not implement a recommendation. Such requests should include detailed justification of the rationale behind the request and full exploration of alternative strategies to accomplish the risk/benefit issues being managed for in the recommendation (see number 4 below for additional details). Requests should be submitted through line supervisors to the ARD for concurrence. Some issues may involve additional dialog and discussions with the HRT before a determination is made.

4. Substitution of alternative actions to address risk/benefit issues
ARD concurrence is needed for any substantive modification to a recommendation. This may be the result of additional work by a technical team or additional interagency and co-manager consultation. It is important to keep in mind that the HET may find more efficient/effective/creative approaches to address the issues identified in the hatchery review than identified by the HRT. HETs are encouraged to pursue these opportunities.

5. Alternate management strategies
Recommendations for short- or long-term program modifications are substantially dependent on management objectives for watersheds and populations. Evaluation of alternatives and recommended strategies are based on both program capabilities and current understanding of objectives and priorities of co-managers. As management strategies continue to evolve, it will be necessary to revisit proposed program goals.

Development of ESA listed species recovery plans are underway in many parts of the Columbia River basin and Puget Sound. As these plans are adopted and move toward implementation, it is likely that they will have substantial bearing on future management strategies and some aspects of hatchery operations.

6. Interagency coordination
Recommendations which result in changes in program numbers, release sites, stock, or program benefits may require significant interagency coordination. Co-manager modification of management objectives can be expected to lead to reevaluation of recommended short- and long-term programs. For example, *US vs. OR* reviews and deliberations should be a critical step in implementing recommendations that modify expected program benefits in the Columbia River Basin. Project leaders, in coordination with the hatchery HET, need to insure the appropriate Service representative is prepared to present, describe, and advocate for program changes through various regional co-manager forums.

7. Budgeting
Project Leaders should utilize, to the extent possible, their station dollars to carry out hatchery reform actions. Where existing budgets are not adequate, Project Leaders should propose and prioritize stations project needs and Line Supervisors will regionally prioritize Resource Management funds to implement hatchery review recommendations. Since recommendations to modify physical facilities, operational procedures, and evaluation activities are all addressed within the hatchery review/reform framework, several funding sources will be appropriate for this initiative. Service project leaders will use established out-year funding processes (e.g., FIS,

SAMMS, and Construction) to identify funding needs. Action Agency funding for mitigation facilities will be pursued for the implementation of recommendations at hatcheries supporting mitigation programs. Cost recovery from action agencies through annual work planning and budget negotiations should occur from ARD down through project leaders.

8. Role of FIS, requesting proposal funding, and progress tracking

Completed hatchery reviews will be entered into the Fisheries Information System (FIS) using the guidelines of Appendix 1 of this policy. Final reports and recommendations will be entered into the Plans Module. Implementation of recommendations will be inputted and tracked in the Accomplishments Module. Requests for additional FWS funding for hatchery operational or monitoring and evaluation activities will be inputted into the FONS Module.

9. Follow-up reviews

New information and management strategies will require periodic reassessment. The ARD, with recommendations from the Oversight Team and hatchery project leaders, will establish appropriate schedules for follow-up reviews.

Appendix 1.—FIS and SAMMs database system guidance.

Initial FIS Data Entry of HRT/ Reviews and Recommendations

- All HRT Final Reports and Recommendations should be inputted into the Plans Module as a *Fishery Management Plan.* This should be done within 2 months of final report completion. All recommendations should be identified with a specific task, including recommendations to modify physical facilities.
- The responsible hatchery/complex manager will be designated as the Plan Expert. The plan expert is responsible for data quality in the Plans Module, including updates to the status of tasks (i.e. *active, completed, obsolete*).

Documenting Implementation and Progress:

- *Responsible facilities.*—A facility whose operations are addressed in an HRT Review inputted into the FIS Plans Module must generate and maintain a single project record in the Accomplishments database.
- "Hatchery Review" should be included in the title of each station's Accomplishment project record
- The project should cite the related Plan and any/all recommendations (i.e. *'tasks') that are being conducted (i.e. 'worked on' or 'met') in that fiscal year.* A task should be marked as 'worked on' if substantive work is performed, beyond general prioritization and discussion within the HET.
- Such projects should also use the 'Accomplishment Summary' and/or 'Project Details/Further Description' fields to annotate any action taken in a given fiscal year and identify how it addresses a hatchery review benefit or risk;
- The new 'Documents' channel and 'Pictures' channel should be used, as needed, to include additional records that describe Review implementation efforts in more detail than allowed within the Project Details channel's space/ character limitations.

Documenting requested funding for Hatchery Review Implementation:

- Funding requests for physical modifications to facilities (e.g. addressing deferred maintenance/procuring capital improvements involving registered assets) **should not** be inputted into the FIS/FONS module, and should instead be captured in the SAMMS database.
- Any FONS proposals associated with management of one or more assets registered in SAMMS should reference the asset number in the 'Related SAMMS Data' field within the FONS module 'Funding' channel.
- Stations with HRT Review-based proposals must also fulfill at least four data entry obligations:
    1. The term 'Hatchery Review' must be included in the proposal Title;
    2. The 'Project Details 'Further Description' datafield should address the importance of the recommendation proposed for funding relative to implementation of other recommendations, and why within-base funding is not available to implement the need directly;
    3. The FONS proposal must link both to the relevant HRT/HSRG Review Plan and task(s) driving the funding request
    4. The *Responsible facility* must rank the proposal within 60 days or less of entry into the FONS database
- All other FIS Business Rule requirements regarding completion of FONS proposals still apply.