



August 2014

Greetings:

I am pleased to present you with the draft *Aquatic Lands Habitat Conservation Plan*, developed by the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. DNR is responsible for the stewardship of 2.6 million acres of lands under marine and fresh waters of Washington, which are managed as a public trust for all Washingtonians.

DNR's goals in the draft HCP are to protect sensitive, threatened and endangered aquatic species, several of which have been listed under the federal Endangered Species Act; and to identify, improve and protect important habitat on state-owned aquatic lands. The draft HCP formalizes the agency's efforts to conserve and enhance these lands, and provides a stable management framework grounded in science and based on the principles of sustainability. The plan offers consistency and addresses the protection of species through DNR's management decisions, including authorizing public and private uses of state-owned aquatic lands.

The draft HCP is a culmination of nearly eight years of effort by DNR aquatics staff, working closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service.

Through our aquatic management decisions, DNR strives for a balance of public benefits for all the people of the state, which include encouraging public use and access, fostering water-dependent uses, ensuring environmental protection, and using renewable resources.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Goldmark".

Peter Goldmark
Commissioner of Public Lands