



Policy Recommendations from Idaho Governor Brad Little's Salmon Workgroup

December 2020



Develop policy recommendations for Governor Little through a collaborative, consensus driven, public process to restore abundant, sustainable, and well-distributed populations of salmon and steelhead in Idaho for present and future generations, while recognizing diverse interests throughout the State.

- Idaho Governor's Salmon Workgroup Mission Statement

Policy Recommendations from Idaho Governor Brad Little's Salmon Workgroup

Salmon and steelhead are a vital part of a vast ecosystem encompassing the headwaters of natal streams out to the ocean. In Idaho, these anadromous fish spawn and rear in some of the best habitat in the continental United States. As a result of many factors, including an altered environment, these iconic species have been driven towards extinction. There is an urgent need to turn things around.

In April 2019, Idaho Governor Brad Little announced his Workgroup on Salmon Recovery (Salmon Workgroup), recognizing that the status quo approach to salmon recovery and restoration was not working. He requested that Idaho stakeholders and Tribes provide him with consensus driven recommendations to move toward recovery.

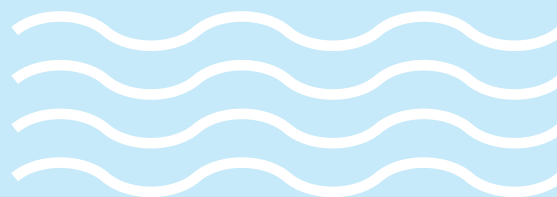
These fish and their integral place in our Northwest heritage require our action. Generations to come will inherit these lands, rivers, and fish, and it should be our calling and our duty to improve upon what we pass on to them. While it's clear that Idaho cannot restore salmon and steelhead on its own, the State can play an important role in local, regional, and national efforts to do so.

Idahoans want abundant, sustainable, and well-distributed populations of salmon and steelhead in Idaho for present and future generations. To that end, the members of the Idaho Governor's Salmon Workgroup respectfully submit these recommendations to Gov. Little. These recommendations do not advocate for changes to Idaho law, and, where applicable, all recommendations should be considered consistent with existing laws and regulations.



Anadromous Fish

Salmon and steelhead are anadromous fish. Anadromous fish hatch from eggs buried in gravel and rear as juveniles for varying periods in freshwater. Next, these fish migrate to the ocean and reside for periods typically of 1 to 3 years, but some up to 8 years. Finally, they return to freshwater as adults to spawn in their natal waters.





It is our desire that the State act on these recommendations in a way that acknowledges and fulfills the following overarching principles:

- Recognize Tribal dependence on salmon and steelhead to meet spiritual, cultural, subsistence, and economic needs as a prevailing necessity of their culture and society. Honor federal treaty, executive order, and trust obligations to the Columbia Basin Tribes.
- Make Idaho's diverse river-dependent industries, communities, and economies whole, while equitably sharing the conservation/restoration obligations and benefits among impacted sovereigns and stakeholders.
- Support policies and actions that go beyond current efforts to recover Idaho salmon and steelhead populations.
- Restore ecological functions throughout the basin necessary for salmon and steelhead to thrive.

What follows in this report is a first for Idaho. It is the first time in our State's rich history that Tribes and diverse stakeholders, as represented in this Workgroup, have collaborated on shared visions for salmon and steelhead. The report reflects a significant effort by all members to find consensus. In this light, the importance of these recommendations cannot be overstated.

The recommendations below will not end the conversation in Idaho or the region. If we are to enjoy abundant, sustainable, and well-distributed populations of salmon and steelhead, more conversations are necessary. More collaboration will be needed. More work must be done. We encourage a renewed evaluation of these policies over time to ensure that the goals of the Workgroup are being accomplished.

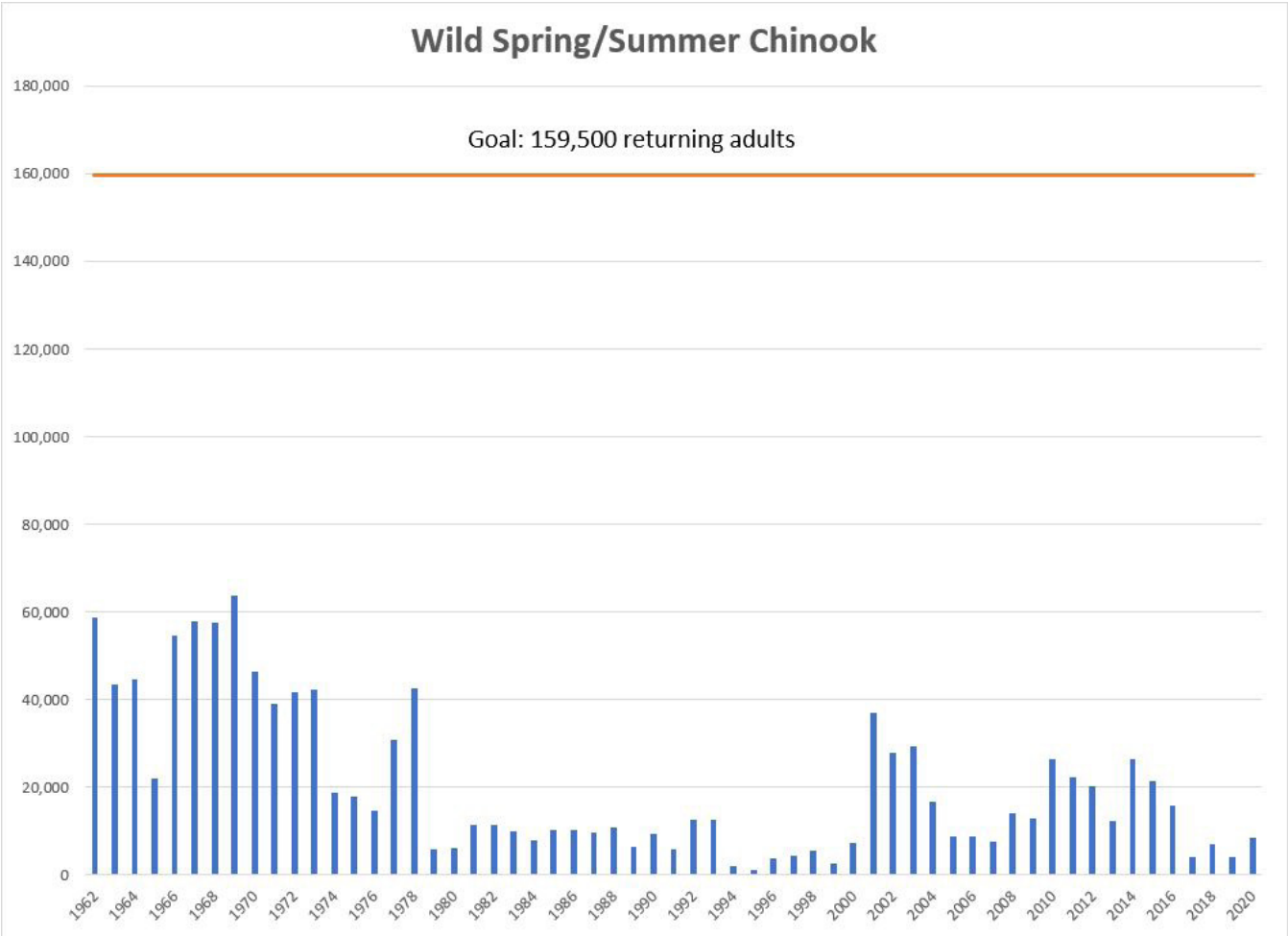
As these collaborative meetings end, each Workgroup member commits to continue efforts to find consensus-driven, collaborative solutions aimed at restoring these iconic fish.

All of us in the Workgroup want to sincerely thank Gov. Little

for providing us the opportunity to participate in this effort. We also thank the diverse interests represented on the Workgroup for their hard work and dedication. Finally, we thank the citizens of Idaho, and the region, for their passion and engagement on this issue.

I. BACKDROP

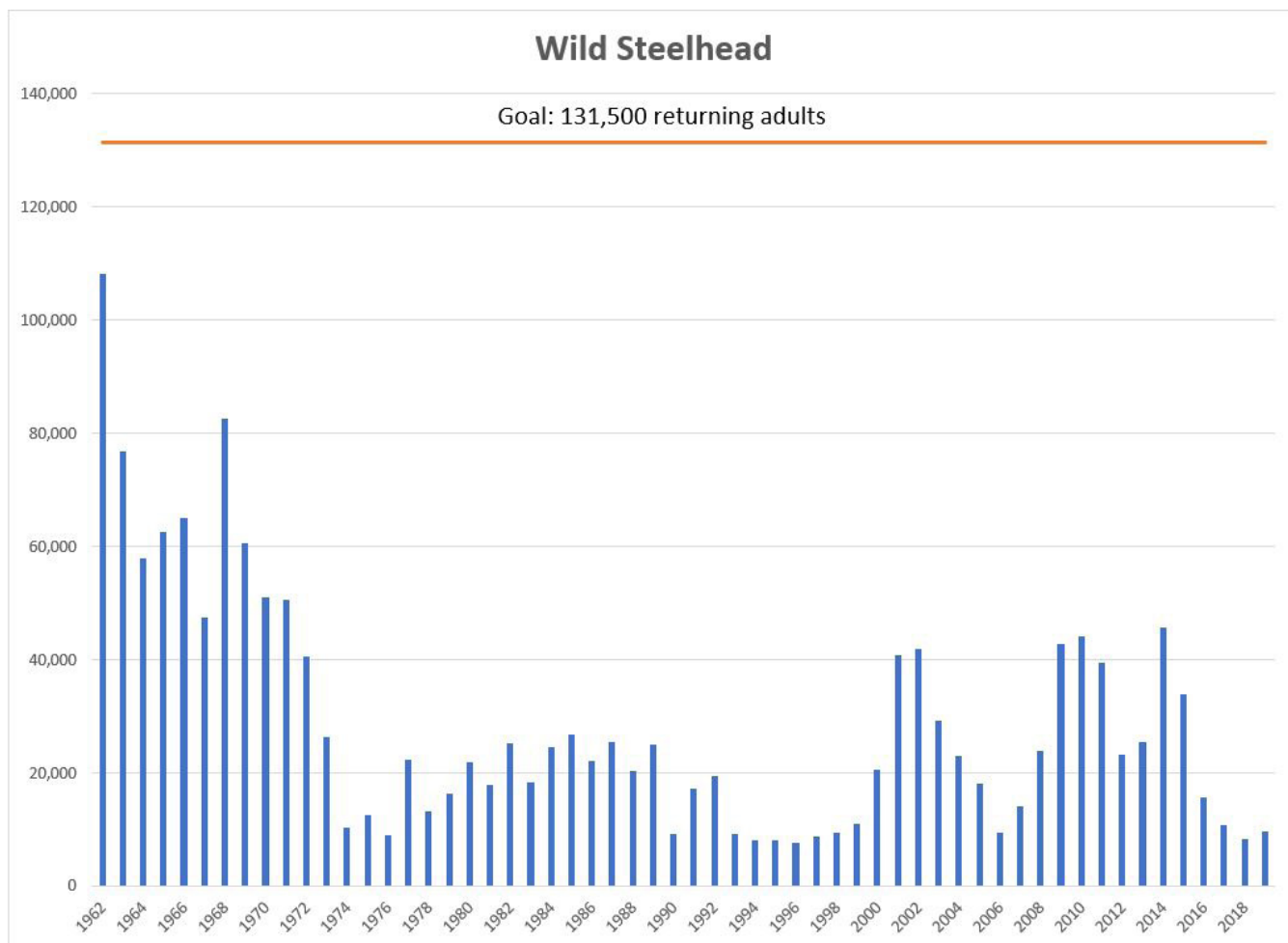
Populations of salmon and steelhead in Idaho and throughout the Pacific Northwest are at a fraction of their historical numbers. These declines are caused by many factors and impact Idaho’s Tribal and fishing communities and many species in Idaho’s ecosystem that depend on the nutrients Idaho’s salmon provide to local habitat and river systems. Currently, Snake River sockeye¹, Chinook salmon², and steelhead³ are listed as either threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Within the Columbia River Basin, including the Snake River and its tributaries, 16 salmon and steelhead stocks are listed under the ESA and some stocks have gone extinct. For a broader explanation of the backdrop of salmon and steelhead in Idaho and the



¹ See 56 Fed. Reg. 58619 (Nov. 20, 1991); See also <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/endangered-species-conservation/snake-river-sockeye-salmon>.

² See 57 Fed. Reg. 14653 (April 22, 1992); See also <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/endangered-species-conservation/snake-river-fall-run-chinook-salmon> (Fall-run Chinook); <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/endangered-species-conservation/snake-river-spring-summer-run-chinook-salmon> (Spring/Summer Chinook).

³ See 62 Fed. Reg. 43937 (Aug. 18, 1997); See also <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/endangered-species-conservation/snake-river-basin-steelhead>.



region, including a discussion of factors leading to the decline, review the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports of the Columbia Basin Partnership (CBP).⁴

Salmon and Steelhead are Critically Important to Tribal Communities

Columbia Basin Tribes could rightly be called “Salmon People” for how completely these sacred fish shape their culture, diets, societies, and religions. These fish are so fundamental to Tribes that they have developed cultural practices and ceremonies to honor their existence and to maintain their connection and relationship to them. Salmon and steelhead came from fully functioning and productive habitat and river systems in what is now known as the Columbia and Snake Basins.

Tribes share the common experience of living through substantial change brought about by the injuries and losses to Tribal resources, including reduced availability or extirpation of salmon and steelhead populations caused by the development and degradation of salmon habitat that have occurred in the Snake and Columbia Basins. This altered ecosystem no longer supports the quantities of fish that once sustained Tribes of the area. As a result, Tribal harvest of salmon and steelhead is a fraction of both the historical levels and the Tribes’ needs. Tribes are involved with various efforts to restore salmon and steelhead to reservation and ceded or aboriginal areas.

⁴ Columbia Basin Partnership Phase 1 Report, (finalized May 2019), and Phase 2 Report, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/vision-salmon-and-steelhead-goals-restore-thriving-salmon-and-steelhead-columbia-river-basin>

Salmon and Steelhead Lifecycle

Lakes, rivers, and streams in Idaho are named for these iconic fish – including the Salmon River and Redfish Lake. Salmon once came to these areas with such plentitude it was said you could walk across the water on the backs of the fish.

The salmon and steelhead lifecycle is an arduous journey. They start as eggs, in redds (i.e., nests) built by the females in Idaho rivers and streams. Their spawning and rearing habitats range from small mountain streams to large mainstem rivers. The eggs grow into fry, then smolts. Smolts then make their way down river, travelling hundreds of miles to reach the ocean. The fish will spend from one to eight years in the ocean, gathering nutrients. They then begin their journey home to their natal streams to spawn in spring, summer, and fall. For Idaho's salmon and steelhead populations, this journey takes them over eight dams, as many as 900 miles and as high as 6,500 feet in elevation.

After spawning the salmon die, giving vital nutrients back to the ecosystem. Steelhead may not die after spawning, instead they may return to the ocean before returning to spawn.

“As go the Salmon runs; so goes the Salmon People.” – Joe Oatman, Nez Perce Tribe

The Kootenai, Coeur D'Alene, Nez Perce, Shoshone-Paiute, and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes have depended upon the lands, rivers, and natural resources of their territories and homelands since time immemorial. Today these territories and homelands overlap, in part, with the geography of Idaho. These Tribes are diverse and unique in terms of their traditional areas as are the types of species located in these areas and how each Tribe uses these fish. Each Tribe has direct relationships with the United States as a result of treaties or executive orders, and the United States has a federal trust responsibility to these Tribes. Tribal fisheries and use of natural resources are addressed through these unique direct relationships and as a matter of federal Indian law.

Tribes are sovereign governments that exercise inherent authorities to address the needs of their people and the treaty and trust natural resources they depend upon. They exercise their governmental authorities and management responsibilities over natural resources in areas applicable to each Tribe (the nature and scope of rights may differ, particularly as it relates to off-reservation areas). Some Tribes have salmon that return to areas where they can harvest fish (though at a fraction of both the historical levels and the Tribes' needs), other Tribes may no longer have access to fish in their areas as result of man-made barriers—such as dams—that completely block the migration of salmon and steelhead to areas upstream of these barriers, and other Tribes may have both of these situations. Reintroduction of fish to blocked areas is an area of interest to Tribes who are impacted by such barriers that prevent fish from reaching certain watersheds they once inhabited.

Factors Affecting Snake River Salmon and Steelhead – the 4Hs, an O, and a P

Habitat: A healthy habitat is key for healthy salmon and steelhead. These fish need clean, cold water, a healthy migratory corridor, a place to spawn and rear, and a way to access their natal spawning ground. Healthy riparian areas provide cover for protection from predators, shade that cools water in the summer and reduces icing in winter, and bank stability to reduce impacts of erosion. In Idaho, historical mining, ranching, agricultural, and other practices have degraded a portion of what once was prime habitat. Other areas of once prime habitat have been blocked by developments on Idaho's rivers. Through collaborative efforts with Tribes, landowners, and others, work to reverse the historical degradation is being done. Currently, 3,700 miles, or about 62%, of Idaho's historical spawning and rearing habitat for spring/summer Chinook and steelhead remains accessible.⁵

Hatchery: In Idaho, hatchery programs are operated by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), the Nez Perce Tribe, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Hatchery programs are vital to Idaho's Tribes and the economies of rural riverside communities, providing harvest and conservation opportunities that would otherwise not exist because of depressed wild populations. While Idaho realizes many benefits from hatchery programs, there are also risks that hatchery fish can pose to wild stocks. Current salmon and steelhead hatchery programs have undergone ESA consultations and have hatchery and genetic management plans (HGMPs) in place that set guidelines to help address the effects of hatchery production on wild/natural fish.

Harvest: Harvest is regulated under laws, treaties, and agreements, including the Columbia River Compact and U.S. v. Oregon. Each season, Tribes, IDFG, and others use their sovereign authorities to determine when, where, and how much harvest is available for a particular species. In addition, biological opinions ensure that salmon and steelhead harvest does not jeopardize ESA-protected stocks. Due to the large decline in natural production, today's harvest in Idaho is dependent upon hatchery production with harvest of wild natural fish allowed at a conservative impact rate in line with their scarcity.

Hydro: Hydroelectric dams and their reservoirs alter riverine habitat, flow, velocity, and temperature of water to varying degrees, creating a source of mortality for salmon and steelhead. In some instances, dams block access to historical habitat completely. Juveniles rely on fast-moving water to carry them downstream in a timely manner. Dams hinder this endeavor by creating physical barriers and slowing water velocity. Under average water flow conditions, what was once a 14-day migration now takes about 24 days for smolts.⁶ The fish must find a way past these dams – generally over a spillway or through a powerhouse intake where they either pass through the turbine or are screened, then barged or put back into the river. Adult salmon and steelhead ascend the dams in fish ladders attached to the dams.

⁵ Fisheries Management Plan 2019-2024, IDFG, June 2019, <https://idfg.idaho.gov/sites/default/files/2019-2024-idaho-fisheries-management-plan-original.pdf>

⁶ ESA Recovery Plan for Snake River Spring/Summer Chinook Salmon and Snake River Basin Steelhead, page 141, NOAA Fisheries, 2017, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/resource/document/recovery-plan-snake-river-spring-summer-chinook-salmon-and-snake-river-basin>

Ocean: Salmon and steelhead from the Columbia River Basin enter and exit the Pacific Ocean at the mouth of the Columbia River. While in the ocean, where they spend most of their lives, these salmon and steelhead may travel thousands of miles, gaining nutrients and maturing to adulthood before migrating back to their spawning grounds. Therefore, ocean conditions – changing temperatures, salinity, acidity, and other factors – have a significant impact on salmon and steelhead. During 2014-2016, a marine heat wave created a “blob” of hot water in the northeastern Pacific Ocean, resulting in devastating effects on marine and land species, including Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead.

Predation: The amount of predation affecting salmon and steelhead has increased in recent years, exacerbated by the hydroelectric dam system. These predators include birds, other fish, and pinnipeds (i.e., seals and sea lions). In recent years, there has been a significant increase in predation in the lower Columbia River. Data on these recent trends is limited and requires further survey and study. Management strategies have been implemented to curtail predation and some studies have been completed to better understand the effects of migration timing.

II. THE IDAHO GOVERNOR’S SALMON WORKGROUP

In April 2019, Gov. Little announced his Salmon Workgroup, which allowed diverse stakeholders to work together to collectively and collaboratively find Idaho-centric solutions to address the decline of salmon and steelhead, and craft policy recommendations for the governor.

Since the Workgroup’s first meeting in June 2019, members have met, on average, every six weeks over 18 months, for a total of 16 meetings. Meetings were held throughout Idaho, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse needs and interests across the State and an opportunity to tour relevant field sites. Moving locations also facilitated public involvement. When COVID-19 prevented in-person meetings, Workgroup members continued to meet and take public testimony online.



Groups Represented on the Governor's Salmon Workgroup

Idaho Wildlife Federation • Idaho Water Users Association • Upper Snake River Water Users • Idaho Power • Port of Lewiston • Idaho Consumer Owned Utilities Association • Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation⁷ • Shoshone-Bannock Tribes • Northwest Power and Conservation Council • Nez Perce Tribe • Trout Unlimited • Idaho Conservation League • The Nature Conservancy • Idaho Grain Producers • Idaho State Senate • Idaho House of Representatives • Sportsman Interests • Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association • Idaho River Community Alliance • Rancher/Landowner Interests • Office of Species Conservation

Public engagement was a vital part of this process. Workgroup members received and reviewed hundreds of written comments. An opportunity for public comment also was available at every meeting until Dec. 14, 2020, resulting in hundreds of remarks delivered in person or online. A website was maintained with meeting agendas and other information to further enable public involvement in this process. Comments represented a broad range of perspectives that informed the Workgroup as it developed its policy recommendations.

The Workgroup was supported by two co-facilitators, Katherine Himes and Mike Edmondson. Dr. Himes was from the University of Idaho McClure Center for Public Policy Research, a nonpartisan entity committed to convening diverse stakeholders and fostering bipartisan collaboration. Mr. Edmondson was from the Governor's Office of Species Conservation (OSC), which is largely dedicated to restoring salmon and steelhead in Idaho. Additional support was provided by Gov. Little's Director of Policy and IDFG.

III. WORKGROUP PROCESS

A. Developing a Mission Statement and Goals for Healthy and Harvestable Stocks

The Workgroup developed a Mission Statement to serve as an overarching guide throughout the process. That Mission Statement, which is located on the first page of this report, goes beyond Recovery, as it is commonly understood relative to the ESA, by setting a goal of restoring salmon and steelhead to healthy and harvestable levels.

After adopting the Mission Statement, the Workgroup agreed that specific goals would be helpful for future discussions. Relying on the qualitative and quantitative goals established through the reports of the CBP⁸, the Workgroup adopted the following statement:

⁷ Members of the Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation include the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe, Burns Paiute Tribe, Shoshone-Paiute Tribe, and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

Columbia Basin Tribes and diverse Northwest stakeholders, including many of the Idaho interests and sovereign Tribal nations that are participating in this workgroup, participated in NOAA Fisheries Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee's CBP and helped to craft provisional quantitative goals for salmon and steelhead restoration in the Columbia and Snake River Basins and metrics to track progress.

The Workgroup adopts the quantitative goals outlined in the Phase 1 and Phase 2 reports prepared by the CBP (the "CBP Reports"). The CBP goals represent not only delisting (the low-end goals), but also include the levels of abundance (high goals) that this workgroup and Idahoans desire. The Workgroup views the high goals defined in the CBP Reports as intended to represent "healthy and harvestable" abundance levels that would sustain species viability, significant fisheries opportunity and harvest, a fuller range of ecological values, and an "equivalent to empirical estimates of abundance under conditions when populations were previously considered to be reasonably healthy."

Achieving these abundance goals will require actions that address hatchery management, harvest, habitat, the hydro system, predation, and ocean conditions. There are several metrics that can be used to measure success, including, but not limited to, smolt-to-adult return (SAR) rates in the 2% to 6% range (with an average

Columbia Basin Partnership Goals for Wild Snake River Anadromous Fish⁹

Stock	Current Population	Historical Population	Low Goal	Medium Goal	High Goal	High as % of Historical
Spring / Summer Chinook	6,988	1,000,000	33,500	98,750	159,500	16%
Fall Chinook	8,360	500,00	4,200	10,780	23,360	5%
Coho	100	200,000	8,900	26,600	44,100	22%
Sockeye	100	84,000	5,500	15,750	26,000	31%
Steelhead	28,000	600,000	22,500	75,000	131,500	22%

⁸ The Columbia Basin Partnership (Partnership) was convened by NOAA Fisheries and its Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC) in 2017 and concluded in September 2020. The Partnership brought together diverse representatives from throughout the Columbia Basin to establish a common vision and goals for the Columbia Basin and its salmon and steelhead. Representation on the Partnership included Columbia Basin Tribes; fishing, agriculture, conservation, river transportation, port, and hydropower interests; and the states of Idaho, Montana, Washington, and Oregon. Idaho representation on the Partnership included the Governor's Office, the Office of Species Conservation, water users and conservation groups. During Phase 2 of the Partnership process, representatives from Idaho, Oregon, Tribes, water users, and other stakeholders worked to develop goals for restored fisheries in blocked areas above the Hells Canyon Complex on the Snake River.

⁹ All figures taken from Columbia Basin Partnership (CBP) Phase 2 Report. The Phase 2 goals were adopted by the CBP in September 2020.

4%) and other metrics identified in the 2014 Northwest Power and Conservation Council's Fish and Wildlife Program and the CBP Reports.

The Workgroup recognizes that reaching Idaho's goals will require immediate, ongoing, and persistent efforts by federal, state, local, and Tribal governments and stakeholders. The Workgroup further understands that reaching Idaho's goals will vary among Snake River stocks and that significant actions and adaptive management measures may be necessary to ensure that goals are reached as quickly as possible.

B. Agenda Subgroup

An Agenda Subgroup was created to ensure the process, presentations, and meetings were in accord with how the Workgroup wanted to proceed. Throughout the process, Workgroup members suggested topics to aid in the Workgroup's understanding of the issues related to salmon and steelhead. Using these suggestions, the Agenda Subgroup, working with the co-facilitators and IDFG, gathered presenters and developed meeting agendas. After obtaining consensus on agendas, the subgroup posted them on the OSC website.

C. Gaining a Common Understanding

The Workgroup acknowledged that learning more about salmon and steelhead needed to come before drafting policy recommendations. The learning process provided members with a greater understanding of topics, such as previous and current restoration efforts, hatchery and fishery operations, habitat and water quality, estuary and ocean conditions, Tribal involvement and governance, and different methods of quantifying fish returns. The full range of technical presentations made to the Workgroup is available on the OSC website.

Presenters included federal and state agency representatives, Tribal representatives, and others. Along with presentations, Workgroup members participated in site visits to tour facilities and understand topics, such as stream restoration projects, PIT tagging, hatchery programs, and dam operations. The presentations and site visits provided the Workgroup with a shared foundational understanding of current efforts to conserve, protect, and restore salmon and steelhead, and what more could potentially be done.

D. Drafting Policy Recommendations

In April 2020, the Workgroup started drafting policy recommendations. Each member was tasked with developing recommendations based on the information received through Workgroup meetings. Key considerations while drafting these potential recommendations were: (i) feasibility and time to implement, (ii) impact on achieving the Mission Statement, (iii) probability of consensus, and (iv) movement towards recovery and then to healthy and abundant stocks. Each Workgroup member developed and submitted policy recommendations for consideration.

After proposing recommendations, Workgroup members were divided into four small groups tasked with reviewing and refining them. An assigned subject matter expert supported each small group's efforts. Initially, each small group was assigned one area – generally from Habitat, Harvest, Hatchery, and Hydrosystem, known as the four Hs. The recommendations then rotated through the other small groups, with additional topics being added for consideration.

In an effort to help some members determine whether the proposed policy recommendations support achieving the Mission Statement, the Workgroup used an “impact/effort grid” to rank the recommendations.¹⁰ This approach enabled Workgroup members to consider how impactful a policy recommendation might be (minor or major improvements to fish) and what kind of effort it might involve (a simple or complex policy to implement).

E. Finding Consensus

The Workgroup was tasked with identifying consensus recommendations for policies that would help restore Idaho salmon. This process highlighted to the Workgroup the fundamental challenge with any collaboration: not all policy recommendations will receive unanimous support and some may not receive consensus support. Limiting our recommendations to only those that would enjoy consensus support meant that there were many policy ideas discussed but not



¹⁰ The “impact/effort” grid involved “impact” on the y-axis and “effort” on the x-axis with four quadrants to assign a policy recommendation. Each policy recommendation is assigned a “type” and the characterization of the benefits to fish (Type 1 “Major/Simple” is one that provides major fish benefits and a simpler pathway to implement, Type 2 “Major/Complex” is one that provides major fish benefits and a more complex pathway to implement, Type 3 “Minor/Simple” is one that provides minor fish benefits and a simpler pathway to implement, and Type 4 “Minor/Complex” is one that provides minor fish benefits and a more complex pathway to implement).

advanced. The Workgroup recognized that certain subjects, for example breaching the lower Snake River dams or a complete moratorium on harvest, would not result in consensus and could interfere with the Workgroup's efforts. Members recognized that they were tasked with finding collective areas of collaboration. This report, including the appendix material, provides a list of policy ideas discussed by the Workgroup – including those for which consensus was not reached.

F. Lower Snake River Dams

One of the most controversial discussions surrounding salmon and steelhead in the Pacific Northwest involves the hydropower system – particularly, the lower Snake River dams (LSRD). The LSRD benefit communities throughout the region and associated economies by providing recreational opportunities, access to hydropower, and a navigation route to deliver Idaho's wheat and other commodities to ocean ports and then the world. However, the LSRD also altered recreational opportunities and significantly impact Idaho's salmon and steelhead returns, resulting in devastating effects on Idaho's Tribal, fishing, and other communities and economies. The LSRD were a regular part of discussions and public comments at Workgroup meetings.

The Workgroup had extensive discussions about the dams, their impacts on fisheries, efforts to mitigate these impacts, and breaching. Key impacts to fish involve prolonged juvenile travel time, increased in-river mortality, cumulative stress (delayed or latent mortality), adult passage delay/blockage, increased predation risk (avian, pinnipeds, piscivorous fish), degraded water quality, and altered water quantity. Some of the policy recommendations considered by the Workgroup are intended to address water flow/spill, passage routes, predator risk, and water quality. A part of this discussion highlighted the need to address powerhouse encounters of fish (PITPH) and decrease water travel time (WTT) for improved fish migration and survival.



Breaching the four lower Snake River dams and investing in affected communities has been an approach some have proposed for consideration. A part of this regional dialogue has emphasized the need to prioritize Snake River issues and to provide sustainable solutions to meet the needs of fish and wildlife, Tribal treaty and trust resources, electricity, food production, transportation, and recreation.

Issues surrounding the LSRD are complicated and highly technical. Any decisions about the maintenance or breaching of the LSRD will require broad discussions among the region's states, Tribes, and stakeholders, and would require congressional actions. Consensus on dam breach/retirement could not be reached. The Workgroup encourages the State to engage the federal government, regional congressional delegates, states, Tribes, and stakeholders in a process to restore thriving and abundant salmon and steelhead fish stocks for Idaho and for the region.



IV. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Idaho desires abundant, sustainable, and well-distributed populations of salmon and steelhead. These healthy and harvestable levels require more than recovery pursuant to the ESA. We must restore salmon and steelhead to levels of abundance that will sustain social, cultural, and economic opportunities for present and future generations and provide a fuller range of ecological benefits.

This document is not a recovery plan. Rather, these recommendations constitute a list of the actions on which we could find consensus. We believe that if these are implemented, it would help salmon and steelhead. Many of these policy recommendations are for actions that are already being implemented. By including them here we are signaling that we believe these measures should continue but they need to be done at a greater scope and scale than currently undertaken. For example, good habitat restoration work is happening but much more needs to be done. There is an urgency to implementing these recommendations and more needs to be done quickly to stave off extinction and to begin moving in the right direction.

A. Habitat Policy Recommendations

Restoration, Connectivity, and Protection: Expand and support, further develop, undertake, and collaborate on programs and projects to restore, enhance, and protect habitat and watershed functions needed to support all life stages of salmon and steelhead.

The following actions in Idaho's connected watersheds to benefit salmon and steelhead support this policy:

- Create and maintain state-wide inventories of habitat in all basins, including identification of limiting factors for various life stages and watershed functions, to provide the best available information and science to assess and plan habitat projects.

- Restore habitat and watershed functions on federal, state, and private lands to conditions that most closely represent the ecological features of a natural riverine ecosystem.
- Protect functioning habitat and watersheds on federal, state, and private lands to ensure that it continues to provide meaningful support for salmon and steelhead.
- Reconnect or improve connectivity within tributaries and mainstem waters for fish access.
- Provide resources to help landowners, communities, agencies, and Tribes protect habitat and watershed functions (e.g., easements, incentives).

Coordination across Agencies: Develop and manage processes that allow and encourage coordination between federal agencies, state agencies, local governments, Tribes, and stakeholders to increase the pace of implementation and ensure that Idaho is attaining its salmon and steelhead goals.

Collaborative Focus: Continue to support voluntary, collaborative programs with property owners, water users, Tribes, and other stakeholders to restore, enhance, and protect anadromous fish habitat and watershed functions.

The following actions support this policy:

- Pursue ESA Section 10(a)(1)(a/b/x) agreements to provide “safe harbors” for those implementing habitat conservation or restoration projects.
- Establish specific anadromous fish financial incentive programs similar to the Good Neighbor Authority or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Programs (CREP).
- Explore opportunities for new initiatives.

B. Harvest Policy Recommendations

Healthy and Harvestable Fisheries: Restoring abundant, sustainable, and well distributed populations of salmon and steelhead (and other anadromous fish) in Idaho for present and future generations supports management/implementation of treaty and non-treaty fisheries to provide important economic, livelihood, and tourism/recreation benefits to communities in Idaho.

Downstream Non-Tribal Recreational and Commercial Fisheries: Coordinate with other relevant managers involved with mainstem Columbia River non-treaty fisheries to ensure Idaho stocks of wild and hatchery salmon and steelhead and fisheries/harvest are considered in Columbia River management decisions.

Encourage the State of Idaho to pursue more significant involvement and decision-making authority in all regional forums and groups that regulate harvest of Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead, including support of federal legislation to add IDFG as a member of the Columbia

River Collaborative, to protect Idaho's wild fish, and to ensure that Idaho has equitable access to Idaho-origin hatchery salmon and steelhead for fishing.

In-State Non-Tribal Fish Management: Continue to assess and seek new opportunities to protect wild fish in non-Tribal fisheries consistent with the ESA. Continue to coordinate with NOAA Fisheries to maintain authorization to conduct fisheries. This includes managing fishery timing, locations, take limits, gear types to maximize protection for endangered populations, and access to harvest shares as described in NOAA authorized Fisheries Management and Evaluation Plans.

Completing studies on the movement of adult fish within Idaho to inform new restrictions on fishing locations or timing such as Feaken et al. 2019 and Lubenau, W. and M. Quist (in progress), *Encounter Rates of Wild Steelhead in Idaho: Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, University of Idaho*, Moscow, ID, supports this policy.

Ocean Commercial Fishing: Engage with regional forums to identify and implement measures that address the impact of ocean fishing on Snake River fall Chinook salmon.

Promoting greater stakeholder involvement where the State of Idaho is involved in regional forums that discuss and regulate Pacific Ocean harvest (e.g., PFMC supports this policy).



C. Hatchery Policy Recommendations

In Idaho, hatchery programs are operated by IDFG, the Nez Perce Tribe, and USFWS. Hatchery fish are managed to provide fish to meet mitigation, supplementation, and conservation objectives for the region. Hatchery programs are vital to Idaho's Tribes and the economies of rural riverside communities, providing harvest and conservation opportunities that would otherwise not exist

due to depressed stocks of wild salmon and steelhead. While Idaho realizes many benefits from hatchery programs, there are risks that hatchery fish can pose to wild stocks. Current salmon and steelhead hatchery programs have undergone ESA consultations and have HGMPs in place that set guidelines to help address the potential effects of production on wild/natural fish.

Hatcheries are operated as either segregated or integrated programs with clearly stated goals and objectives. Segregated hatchery operations are managed to be genetically isolated from wild/natural populations by minimizing both the number of hatchery origin fish that spawn naturally and the number of natural origin fish used as hatchery brood stock. Examples include Dworshak Hatchery steelhead and Rapid River spring Chinook salmon.

Integrated hatchery operations are managed to be genetically similar to an associated natural population through intentional natural spawning of hatchery origin fish and hatchery spawning of natural origin fish (e.g., hatchery supplementation). Supplementation is used to maintain or increase natural production, while maintaining the long-term fitness of the target population and keeping the ecological impacts on non-target populations within specified biological limits. For at risk wild populations, supplementation may be considered to prevent extirpation and maintain genetic diversity. Though there may be impacts to future evolutionary capacity, continued integrated hatchery supplementation can maintain or enhance genetic diversity, increase adult returns, and maintain and rebuild populations of very low abundance, and support fisheries (e.g., Snake River fall Chinook, South Fork Salmon summer Chinook, Redfish Lake sockeye). Decisions about the use of hatcheries need be made in the context of the specific populations and habitats that would be affected.

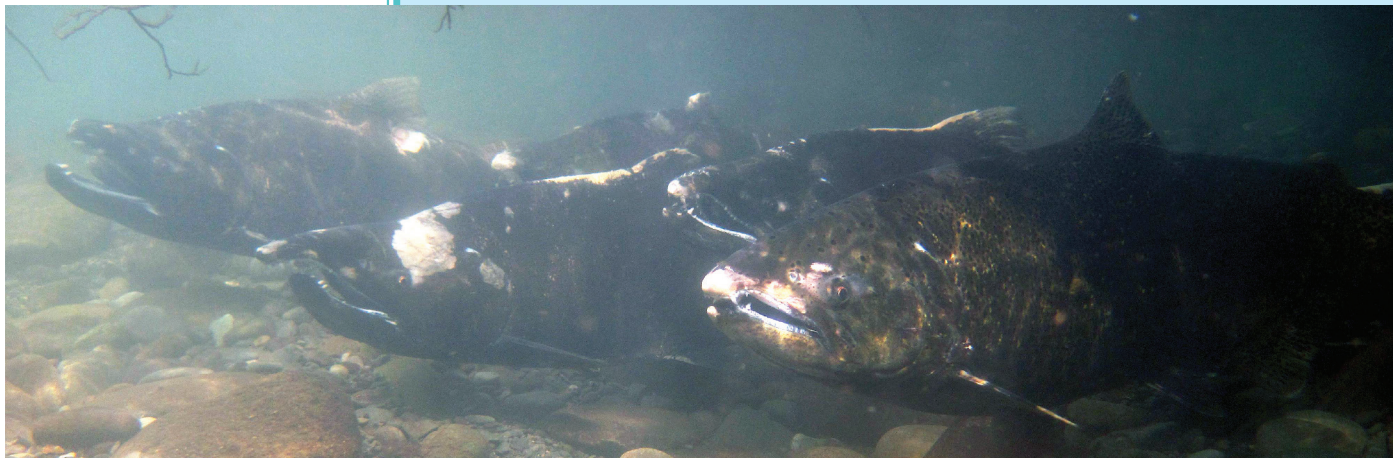
While some supplementation programs address conservation objectives, these types of hatchery programs alone will not achieve healthy and harvestable populations as envisioned by the CBP or the Workgroup until limiting factors in the smolt-to-adult phase of the life cycle are addressed.

Meet Hatchery Mitigation Obligations: Remain committed to ensure that Lower Snake River Compensation Plan (LCRSP), Dworshak Mitigation, Northwest Power Act, and Idaho Power Settlement Agreement goals are met.

Maintain Existing Infrastructure: Advocate for essential funding to restore, repair, or maintain hatchery infrastructure (including release sites, fish weirs, and equipment), and, where appropriate, enhance infrastructure with capital improvements (e.g., improving the Dworshak and Clearwater Fish Hatcheries water supply) to ensure that production goals as well as mitigation, supplementation, and conservation objectives are met.

Enhance and Expand Production: Enhance existing hatchery capacity to meet current mitigation, supplementation, and conservation program goals.

Support expansion of production capacity of existing hatchery facilities where funding, management, and program goals align to provide additional benefits without impairing wild production.



Optimize Hatchery Production: In collaboration with Tribal, federal, and other partners operate and maintain anadromous fish hatcheries to maximize adult returns for both non-Tribal and Tribal harvest, and ensure that hatchery mitigation goals are achieved through improved artificial production techniques and management practices. Use research, monitoring, and evaluation to adaptively manage and improve performance of hatchery programs.

Supplementation: Seek opportunities to support expanded and new supplementation where funding, management, and conservation goals align to bolster natural production in support of achieving healthy and harvestable levels.

Supporting Wild Fish: Support wild fish management-only drainages for salmon and steelhead. Such areas are prime for production of wild Idaho salmon and steelhead and should be maintained for future generations. In hatchery programs outside of wild reproduction zones, adaptively manage production and release practices such that remaining wild fish populations are not negatively impacted. Before implementing hatchery programs in previously un-supplemented populations, in coordination with other managers, consider potential impacts of supplementation and potential changes in hatchery production should natural production improve to healthy and harvestable levels.

D. Hydropower Policy Recommendations

Spill Regime: Advocate for an aggressive spill regime that maximizes benefits to juvenile fish while minimizing impacts to power generation.

- Support operations at lower Columbia and lower Snake River dams that minimize PITPH and WTT for juvenile migrants.
- Support spill operations that include spill up to 125% Total Dissolved Gas at times that benefit fish and recognize a balance with power generation.
- Support adaptive management of this program to provide real-time adjustments (including hours of day, season, duration) to ensure that spill results in the greatest benefits to Idaho's salmon and steelhead.

Flow Augmentation: Optimize existing programs and agreements that use water from Idaho to continue to improve conditions for anadromous fish during the migratory period or improve river flows.

Surface Passage: Advocate for Columbia River System (CRS) operations and infrastructure that further minimize powerhouse encounters and maximize surface passage by out-migrating juvenile salmon, steelhead, and lamprey.

E. Blocked Area Fisheries

Blocked Area Fisheries: Support adult salmon and steelhead put-and-take Tribal and non-Tribal fisheries in blocked areas, consistent with Idaho State policy, through use of state allocated, non-ESA listed adults. Collaborate with Tribes and other implementation partners on plans to increase hatchery capacity and adult returns available for blocked area fisheries.

In addition to the above proposed policy recommendations, the Workgroup recommends that the Governor amend existing Idaho State Policy related to blocked areas as indicated below. During Phase 2 of the CBP, the States of Idaho and Oregon, the Upper Snake River Tribes, Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho Power, water users, and others discussed restored fisheries in the blocked areas above the Hells Canyon Complex (HCC). As a result of these conversations, the State of Idaho adopted a Blocked Areas Policy. The current Idaho State Policy does not apply to blocked areas outside the areas above the HCC. The following amended Idaho State Policy ensures that all blocked areas in the State are treated consistently. These amendments do not affect policies of other sovereigns.

As used in this policy, the term “blocked areas” refers to the historical salmon and steelhead habitat above the HCC, on the North Fork of the Clearwater above Dworshak Dam, and on Hangman Creek.

1. ~~The Task Force is advised that n~~ No reintroduction of ESA-listed fish to blocked areas ~~upstream of the Hells Canyon Complex~~ is supported by the State of Idaho.
2. ~~The Task Force is advised that~~ The reintroduction of non-ESA-listed fish to blocked areas ~~upstream of the Hells Canyon Complex~~ needs to must be consistent with Idaho state statutes (§ 67-302 and 67-818(5)), which require approval by both legislative (§67-6302) and executive branches of Idaho government (§67-818(5)) and is otherwise prohibited.
3. ~~The Task Force is advised that~~ The reintroduction of non-ESA-listed fish to blocked areas ~~upstream has to must~~ be consistent with Idaho’s and Oregon’s commitments in the 401 Water Quality Certification Settlement Agreement with Idaho Power Company pertaining to the FERC Application for the HCC Re-licensing (2019 Settlement Agreement).

l È Idaho will continue to focus the following funding sources to ESA-listed fish recovery and achieving mitigation objectives in connected areas: BPA's Fish and Wildlife Program, Idaho Fish Accord, NOAA's PCSRF Program, USFWS's Lower Snake River Compensation Plan (LSRCP), and/or other federal funding sources intended to implement the 2019 FCRPS BiOp or subsequent FCRPS BiOps. The intent is to ensure recovery of stocks and to meet LSRCP mitigation objectives in connected areas with the above referenced funding sources and not diminish these efforts by diverting from the above referenced funding sources to implement put and take fisheries in blocked areas ~~above Hells Canyon~~ ~~upstream of the Hells Canyon~~.

í È So long as the above conditions are met, Idaho supports put and take fisheries in blocked areas ~~upstream of the Hells Canyon~~ with the following provisions:

æ È A non-ESA listed hatchery stock must be identified and agreed upon among the parties intending to stock fish in blocked areas ~~upstream of the Hells Canyon Complex~~ with state fisheries managers.

à È Locations and timing for stocking of non-ESA listed fish must be identified and agreed upon by the parties intending to stock fish in blocked areas ~~upstream of the Hells Canyon Complex~~ with state fisheries managers.

8 È Idaho does not support the collection or transport of any juvenile fish that may be produced by adult outplants intended for harvest in the agreed upon put and take fisheries.

F. Predation Policy Recommendations

Predation Management

Promote more aggressive programs and projects of sufficient scope, scale, and distribution to protect anadromous fish from the effects of predators (e.g., piscivorous fish, pinnipeds, birds).



Promote more aggressive engagement with federal partners for increased funding of predator control programs, and advocate for removal of regulatory/legislative constraints on predator control, where necessary.

Continue to manage non-native sport fish that prey on salmon and steelhead with no size or limit restrictions. In addition, implement bounty programs, where appropriate.

Support predation management with the following actions:

- Create and maintain data inventories of where predation occurs in all areas, consolidated at a state-wide level.
- Identify factors that favor predators and work to modify them to reduce or eliminate impacts to anadromous fish both in and outside of Idaho. Prioritize work according to the most limiting predator-prey life stages and locations (e.g., migratory pathway and estuary) and coordinate with federal agencies, other states, and Tribes to maximize the scope and impact of predator control. Monitor and record results and adaptively manage to improve effectiveness.

G. Other Policy Recommendations

Regional Dialogue: Utilize the October 2020 Four State Agreement on Columbia River Salmon, now called the Columbia Basin Collaborative, or subsequent similar agreements, to build a collaborative, regional dialogue with Northwest governors, congressional delegations, Tribal nations, and other stakeholders. As an essential part of this dialogue, develop and implement a comprehensive package of investments and actions to restore abundant, harvestable populations of salmon and steelhead to the Snake River Basin while ensuring that impacted Tribes, stakeholders, and interests are kept and/or made whole.

Education: Undertake efforts to provide up to date information and educate Idahoans on key aspects relating to salmon and steelhead, including but not limited to, the status of runs, the impact of recovery/restoration measures, and what more needs to be done to achieve healthy and harvestable populations.

Water Management and Water Quality: Support collaborative efforts with water users and other stakeholders to provide adequate fishery flows and conditions, anadromous fish habitat, and watershed functions to protect and restore anadromous fish in a manner that is collaborative and consistent with Idaho law.

- Continue and expand efforts and programs including, but not limited to, local rental pool and water transaction programs, recharge, flow augmentation, barrier removal, minimum streamflow projects, and watershed councils.

Science-Driven Policy: Identify areas where key scientific models align in their identification and assessment of significant limiting factors to survival, sources of mortality, and actions to support

restoration of Idaho stocks of salmon and steelhead. Prioritize infrastructural and operational changes and policies accordingly.

Tribal Outfitting and Guiding: Support expanded Tribal economic opportunities in guiding and outfitting, as part of the broader economic, livelihood, and tourism/recreation benefits that salmon and steelhead fisheries provide to the region.

Climate Change: Climate change has affected and continues to significantly impact salmon and steelhead populations throughout the region. Adopt an unambiguous position acknowledging the reality of climate change and commit to actions and policies to mitigate its impacts.

- Factor climate change and its impacts into planning and policies in order to insulate salmon and steelhead from its effects, where possible, and optimize salmon and steelhead habitat and population resiliency.

CRSO ROD: Monitor the status and/or implementation of the Columbia River System Operations Record of Decision and its impact on Idaho salmon and steelhead.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Increase support for research, monitoring, and evaluation programs that support salmon and steelhead abundance objectives.

Funding: Develop Idaho-specific funding strategies to meet the intent and spirit of our mission and goal statements.




V. CONCLUSION

Idahoans want abundant, sustainable and well-distributed populations of salmon and steelhead in Idaho for present and future generations. While it's clear that actions taken by Idaho alone cannot restore salmon and steelhead populations, the State can play a critical role in local, regional, and national efforts to do so.

This report represents the work product of Tribes and a diverse group of stakeholders with a shared interest in reversing the decline of Idaho's salmon and steelhead runs and restoring them to healthy and harvestable levels. Many of these recommendations are actions that are currently being implemented to some degree. The Workgroup recognizes that we must go beyond current efforts to recover Idaho salmon and steelhead populations. This report does not catalogue all actions that could be taken. Rather, a significant amount of effort was made by all members to find areas where consensus could be achieved given our diverse views and connection to rivers and fish.


This Report:

- Acknowledges the importance of fish to Tribes and the need to honor federal treaty, executive order, and trust obligations to them, as well as making Idaho's diverse river-dependent communities and economies whole;
- Focuses on policies and actions that are tailored to address some of the known causes of decline to salmon and steelhead that originate in Idaho waters;
- Represents a consensus-based package in support of our Mission statement and goals;
- Addresses the four lower Snake River dams and the suggestion from the Workgroup that the State should engage the federal government, regional congressional delegates, regional states, Tribes, and stakeholders in a process to work to restore thriving and abundant salmon and steelhead fisheries for Idaho and the region; and
- Calls for urgency to restore healthy, harvestable, and well-distributed numbers of salmon and steelhead in Idaho.



Goals and Timelines for Recovery

Idaho desires abundant, sustainable, and well distributed populations of wild salmon and steelhead. To reach healthy and harvestable levels requires more than recovery pursuant to the ESA. We must restore salmon and steelhead to levels of abundance that will sustain social, cultural, and economic opportunities for present and future generations and provide a fuller range of ecological benefits. Time is of the essence.



The Workgroup asks Gov. Little to rely upon these recommendations to guide recovery actions within the state and to inform Idaho's position in regional discussions on salmon recovery. We thank the Governor for recognizing the urgency and importance of action needed to address chronically low returns and accomplish the stated mission statement and goals for salmon and steelhead. More conversations are necessary. More collaboration will be needed. More work must be done.

APPENDIX

The Report Appendix contains the record for the Workgroup and is housed on the Office of Species Conservation's website (link below). This record includes the following:

- Agendas for each meeting;
- Meeting notes prepared by the facilitator's staff;
- Media advisories;
- Presentation materials for each meeting;
- All written public comment received;
- Drafts of the various recommendations considered by the Workgroup as it developed the recommendations in the final report; and
- Statements of Tribal perspectives.

Public comment was accepted throughout the entire Workgroup process. Time was set aside at each meeting for public comment. In addition, written comments were accepted throughout the process. Written comments are available on the Workgroup website (link below). Oral comments are captured in each meeting's notes. Overall, the Workgroup received over 850 public comments.

Regarding recommendations, the record includes the following: (i) a PowerPoint slide containing all initial recommendation proposals submitted by Workgroup members and (ii) a spreadsheet showing the recommendation iterations as they were developed by small subgroups. The contents of the PowerPoint slide, spreadsheet, and Final Report reflect the recommendations considered by the Workgroup. Several recommendations were not included in the final report because they did not reach consensus, were consolidated into other recommendations, or listed specific projects (which the Workgroup agreed not to include in the report).

The Governor's Salmon Workgroup page can be found at this link: <https://species.idaho.gov/governors-salmon-workgroup/>.