



Major Changes from July 27, 2000, Drafts to Dec. 21, 2000, Final Documents

Conservation of Columbia Basin Fish A Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy

The Federal Caucus released its draft final Basinwide Salmon Recovery Strategy (Strategy) July 27, 2000. In August and September 2000, the agencies held technical consultations and discussions with states and tribes on the Strategy, and received written comments from them. Major changes in the document include:

Rationale: Section 1.3, Vol. I, substantially re-written to include direct references to scientific information used to form Strategy's analytical foundation.

- Direct citations of scientific literature and analyses that form basis of conclusions
- Describes more rigorously the process to be used for evaluating progress under the Strategy, and if necessary, for re-considering various actions and approaches
- More clearly reflects linkages between Strategy's basin-level approaches, Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife program, and efforts already underway or being planned at watershed level within the states.

Habitat: Habitat sections in Vols. I (Section 3.1) and II (Section 1) revised.

- Tables showing actions to be pursued updated to reflect which actions coincide with 2000 FCRPS biological opinion reasonable and prudent alternative
- Habitat analysis in Vol. II revised to reflect a slightly more conservative view of available studies and literature
- Small changes throughout these sections to define more clearly the roles and responsibilities of the respective agencies participating in the Strategy.

Hatcheries: Section 3, Vol. II, substantially re-written to provide more clearly the role of hatchery reforms and conservative hatchery activities.

- Describes role of mass marking
- More thoroughly explains actions that comprise hatchery reforms
- Adds more details about hatchery and genetic management planning process to be used
- Clarifies that role of mitigation hatcheries will not be abandoned
- Explains connection between hatchery production and selective fishing techniques.

Harvest: Section 2, Vol. II, substantially re-written.

- Clearly states that harvest restrictions are flexible and can be revised if stocks respond to Strategy
- More thoroughly explains relationship between harvest restrictions and biological performance of salmon and steelhead
- Provides more detail about how selective fisheries will be developed on an experimental and voluntary basis
- Acknowledges more explicitly the court-ordered process that must be used to seek and reach agreement on a long-term harvest management plan.



Hydro: Hydropower sections in Vols. I (Section 3.7) and II (Section 4) re-written to reflect changes made to FCRPS biological opinions.

- Changes to mid-point evaluation process to take place in three, five and eight years
- Describes recent decisions reflected in NMFS' biological opinion on performance standards to be applied during evaluations
- Language added in Vol. II to clarify conditions under which additional actions might be taken to seek further configuration changes within the hydropower system.

Other:

Implementation:

- Memorandum of Understanding signed by Federal Caucus agencies reproduced in Vol. II, Section 6, describing process to be used to coordinate implementation of the Strategy.
- Implementation Section 2.2, Vol. I, updated to reflect recovery planning process that will follow Strategy's release, and process to be used by Federal Caucus in reporting progress.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Section 2.2, Vol. I, revised to show monitoring and evaluation framework to be used to assess progress under FCRPS biological opinions and Strategy.
- Includes proposals for obtaining data needed to measure progress, resolve critical scientific uncertainties, and develop technical capability to establish biologically based performance standards for each life stage.

NMFS Biological Opinion on Operations of the Federal Columbia River Power System

The final NMFS Biological Opinion no longer includes consultation with the Bureau of Reclamation on 10 upper Snake River irrigation projects, which will be covered in a separate biological opinion. The final document specifies when each salmon-saving measure must take place, and defines the mid-point tests to be made and the consequences of failing to meet biological performance standards. The NMFS Biological Opinion provides detailed discussion and lists numerous non-federal actions that may have cumulative impacts on salmon and steelhead. They include specific activities in the Oregon Plan for Salmon, the Washington state's Forests and Fish plan, and TMDLs that will be established by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. Several "reasonable and prudent alternative" measures were modified to cover other resource concerns, such as operations at Hungry Horse Dam in Montana being changed to benefit both bull trout and salmon.