

Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Celebration

Tukwila Community Center

January 19, 2007

Remarks by WDFW Director Dr. Jeff Koenings

Good afternoon---What a great moment – to join you in celebrating and thanking all of you who have worked so hard building the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Plan.

Seven years ago in October of 1999, when 200 of us came together to develop an approach to address the listing of Puget Sound Chinook, we knew we were facing one of the biggest challenges of our careers.

We were staring at the first listing to face a large metropolitan area encompassing literally hundreds of local governments. A listing that would severely affect and involve 20 tribal governments; and would call for actions in international fisheries from Puget Sound to Canada and would require reform of one of the largest hatchery systems in the world.

When many said the task at hand was impossible, you stepped forward and did what no one else in the country had done before.

All of you with the thousands of participants in the Shared Strategy salmon recovery initiative agreed to a voluntary, collaborative process - involving federal, state, tribal and local governments, business representatives, the agricultural and forestry industries, conservation and environmental groups. You all came together at local watersheds and developed scientifically sound solutions that your communities could embrace.

You have created a plan that reflects our passion and dedication for our environment and for our salmon populations. It is the foundation for our legacy – our childrens' future.

I am honored to have been a part of this planning effort, but actually I'm even more excited and focused on our future.

The salmon recovery plan you have developed will be a cornerstone of the Puget Sound Initiative as it gains momentum and moves forward. And thanks to your work on the 3-yr work schedules I am confident, we will not be distracted from implementing the actions necessary to recover Chinook.

It is also important to acknowledge that we would not be talking about implementation if it wasn't for the support from Governor Gregoire and our

federal delegation – Congressman Dicks, Senator Murray and Senator Cantwell.

The proposed \$200 million state investment in the Governor's budget for Puget Sound is an outstanding vote of confidence and commitment to our success. Yes, I know we have funding requests for more than that, but in terms of state budget realities, this is truly a significant investment.

It is also important for all of us to realize that this level of investment will bring with it a heightened level of accountability and need for transparency. It is critical we build the capability to demonstrate:

To local and state leaders, who have tough decisions to make in implementing this plan, that ensuring economic vitality and recovering salmon are not mutually exclusive.

To federal and state funders, that we are investing in priority actions and are able to report on our progress..

To our citizens, whose support is vital, that their individual agreement to make adjustments in their daily lives to benefit salmon is worthwhile and part of a larger, effective plan to recover salmon.

And to ourselves, to track performance and report progress, as well as give us the ability to adaptively manage and improve.

Transparency and accountability will continue to build an essential element for recovery - trust.

Trust that our actions are working together, are producing the results we have set out for ourselves, and that it is fair - that everyone is holding up their part of responsibility for recovery.

Once again, I am honored to have had the Department of Fish and Wildlife be a part of this process and look forward to the challenge of implementing this plan with you.

Thank you again for your hard work in developing this plan and as importantly your commitment to play a role in implementing it.