

PUGET SOUND CHINOOK RECOVERY PLAN APPROVED **Developed by Local Stakeholders, Salmon Plan is the Nation's Biggest**



Jan. 25, 2007 — The [NOAA Fisheries Service](#) approved a far-reaching plan to recover threatened [Chinook salmon](#) in the Puget Sound region of Washington state. This salmon recovery plan, required by the Endangered Species Act, is the largest and most comprehensive ever approved by the federal government. Although recovery plans for threatened and endangered species are typically written by federal officials, the Recovery Plan for Puget Sound Chinook Salmon was developed through more than five years of cooperative efforts by local stakeholder groups. **(Click [NOAA image for larger view of salmon cluster in Puget Sound](#). [Click here for high](#)**

resolution version. Please credit "NOAA.")

"This is a plan built on local salmon-recovery efforts and remarkable cooperation among state, tribal and local governments and others," said [Bob Lohn](#), head of the [NOAA Fisheries Service Northwest Regional Office](#). "You can't get a better foundation for recovery than that."

NOAA is conducting recovery planning in conjunction with a coalition called the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound. The Shared Strategy engaged local citizens, tribes, technical experts and policy makers to build a practical, cost-effective recovery plan endorsed by the people living and working in the watersheds of Puget Sound.

"This is a comprehensive plan that offers real hope for salmon recovery," said Billy Frank Jr., chairman of the [Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission](#). "Developing the plan has helped to build strong bridges between all of us who care about the salmon. I am confident that by working together we will restore Puget Sound Chinook."

This plan sets the course for bringing salmon back to a healthy population size in Puget Sound. It integrates the management of the three H's—habitat, harvest and hatcheries—that are considered the keys to salmon recovery. The plan considers the entire regional ecosystem.

"Recovery planning of salmon depends on a healthy and sustainable Puget Sound basin. We can't save one without the other," said King County Executive Ron Sims, an early advocate for the plan. "We all have important contributions to make, and this grassroots plan gets us going in the right direction. Now we need to make good on our commitments."

Federal approval of this plan arrived just as Washington Governor Christine Gregoire announced a major initiative to protect and restore Puget Sound by 2020. She is proposing a \$200-million investment to clean up Puget Sound, with more than \$50 million dedicated to salmon habitat restoration projects. To ensure that these and other potential funds produce the best results for salmon recovery, local watershed leaders across the region have identified key projects to be completed in the first three years of the 10-year recovery plan.

"Solid, locally developed salmon recovery plans, unique to each watershed, are essential for

guiding the funding of critically needed habitat restoration projects," said Jeff Koenings, director of the [Washington Department of Fish And Wildlife](#). "Scarce dollars need to be spent very wisely to keep the public's confidence and trust in what we do."

The Puget Sound region is a complex mix of densely populated and developed urban areas, including Seattle/Everett/Tacoma, rich agricultural areas and forested headwaters. It includes several large river systems flowing from the western slopes of the Cascade mountains, multiple estuaries, the San Juan Islands, Hood Canal and a northern portion of the Olympic Peninsula.

In addition to Puget Sound Chinook, this domain has two other ESA-listed evolutionarily significant units, or ESUs, of salmon: Hood Canal summer chum and Lake Ozette sockeye. All were listed as threatened under the ESA in 1999. Recovery planning for the other two species also is underway.

The [Endangered Species Act](#) requires the NOAA Fisheries Service to develop and implement recovery plans for conservation and survival of listed species. Recovery is the process by which listed species and their ecosystems are restored and their future secured to the point that protection under the ESA is no longer needed. Recovery plans describe specific management actions, establish measurable criteria for delisting, and estimate the time and cost of carrying out measures needed to achieve recovery.

The NOAA Fisheries Service is the federal agency charged with protecting Northwest salmon listed under the Endangered Species Act. Salmon recovery planning is underway throughout Washington, Idaho, Oregon and California. Locally generated plans for other listed salmon populations are expected later this year. While all recovery plans meet ESA requirements using consistent scientific principles, NOAA's recovery-planning process is designed to maximize local involvement by incorporating ongoing salmon conservation and planning efforts.

NOAA, an agency of the [U.S. Commerce Department](#), is celebrating [200 years of science and service](#) to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA. NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems ([GEOSS](#)), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

Relevant Web Sites

[NOAA Puget Sound Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan](#)

[NOAA Fisheries Service](#)

[NOAA Fisheries Portal](#)

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(Photos courtesy of the [NOAA Restoration Center](#).)