



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
Northwest Fisheries Science Center  
2725 Montlake Boulevard East  
Seattle, WA 98112-2097

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Dear Interested Parties:

We are pleased to announce that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is in the process of adopting formal recovery plans for ESA listed Pacific salmon in the Pacific Northwest, and is soliciting nominations for a Pacific Northwest Recovery Implementation Science Team (RIST) to support recovery plan implementation.

The RIST will be a group of scientists with broad expertise that 1) provides scientific information supporting recovery implementation decisions, and ensures that a regional perspective is maintained for that information; 2) is responsible for communicating that information to NMFS offices within the region through the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC), as well as potentially to regional recovery planning groups, and other stakeholders; and 3) can form task teams to complete specific analyses, reviews or evaluations. Information from the RIST will be scientific or technical, and is intended to inform policy and management decisions, not to prescribe or make decisions.

#### *RIST membership*

The RIST will consist of experts in salmonid biology, population dynamics, conservation biology, ecology, and other disciplines relevant to salmon recovery. The RIST will be chaired by a scientist from the NWFSC, and will include up to 5 of the current Northwest Technical Recovery Team (TRT) chairs. We are asking for your help in soliciting nominations for up to an additional 9 members from the public, academia, other state, federal and tribal agencies, or the private sector. Each member must meet the first three criteria below (numbers 1-3) and at least one of the remaining three criteria (numbers 4-6).

1. High achievement in a relevant discipline, which may include ecology, genetics, fisheries, hydrology, river geomorphology, or other appropriate disciplines.
2. High standards of scientific integrity, independence, and objectivity.
3. A demonstrated interest in and ability to work effectively in an interdisciplinary team setting.
4. Extensive knowledge of West Coast salmonid biology, status, or habitat.
5. A record of scientific accomplishment documented by contributions to peer-reviewed literature or other evidence of success in a creative scientific endeavor.
6. A demonstrated ability to forge creative solutions to complex problems.

An independent panel will evaluate all nominations to ensure that they meet the above criteria. Scientists who have been previously selected for any of the TRTs will not need to be evaluated again, and thus automatically are eligible for consideration. The panel will provide a list of



qualified candidates to the Science Director of the NWFSC who—in consultation with the NMFS Northwest Regional Administrator—will make final appointments to the team. Final selection of the RIST members will aim to balance areas of scientific expertise and familiarity with the recovery domains.

We anticipate that members of the RIST will need to devote approximately 25 percent of their time to fulfill their responsibilities. Initial terms will be for two years. The positions are not compensated, but NMFS will pay travel costs to attend meetings.

### *Background*

Several years ago, NMFS promoted a recovery planning process that combined scientific expertise from Technical Recovery Teams (TRTs) with leadership from local and regional policy makers to draft comprehensive salmon recovery plans. These plans are now nearing completion, and are, or will soon be, in the process of being adopted as formal recovery plans by the agency.

A critical component of recovery plan development has been scientific support from the TRTs. NMFS formed TRTs for each of 8 geographic recovery domains in the Pacific Northwest and California. The TRTs consist of experts in salmonid biology, population dynamics, conservation biology, ecology, and other disciplines relevant to conservation science. They are chaired by scientists from the Northwest or Southwest Fisheries Science Centers, and contain members from a diverse group of state, federal, tribal and local fish and wildlife agencies; universities; and the private sector. All members have excellent scientific credentials, as assessed by an independent panel. The TRTs have been highly successful at providing broad-based, scientifically sound input into the development of salmon recovery plans.

With the adoption of recovery plans for most Pacific Northwest recovery domains, the Pacific Northwest TRTs either have completed or are close to completing their initial tasks of developing biological recovery goals and providing science support for recovery plan development. NMFS therefore expects to phase out most of the existing Pacific Northwest TRTs as they complete their final tasks during 2007.

The TRTs have been successful at bringing scientific consensus to a complex range of issues, and we are enormously grateful for the support this process has received from both scientists and policy makers throughout the Pacific Northwest. We extend our heartfelt thanks both to the individual scientists who served on the TRTs and to the region at large for embracing and supporting the recovery planning process.

Even as the recovery plans are completed, however, there is a continuing need for broad-based scientific input into recovery plan implementation. Examples of ongoing science needs include:

- Analysis of the efficacy of particular recovery actions
- Development of monitoring and evaluation programs
- Scientific information and analysis to inform prioritization, sequencing, and development of effective strategies and actions
- Providing scientific review of plan updates and analyses for policy, funding, and oversight groups



NMFS is initiating the RIST to meet these ongoing needs in the Pacific Northwest. An important feature of the RIST will be its ability to form temporary task teams, which are expected to include membership outside of the RIST, to deal with specific conceptual or geographical issues. Once it is formed, the RIST will be responsible for initiating its own task teams. However, in the interim we are currently soliciting nominations for members for two task teams that will focus on the Puget Sound area. A new Puget Sound steelhead TRT will develop viability criteria for recently listed Puget Sound steelhead, and a Puget Sound Recovery Implementation Technical Team (RITT) will focus on technical aspects of recovery plan implementation for listed Puget Sound salmon and steelhead. More information on both of these teams can be found on the NWFSC web site (see below). The combination of having a single RIST for the Pacific Northwest, combined with the flexibility of the RIST to form task teams, is expected to produce a valuable combination of scientific continuity and local expertise. The RIST will coordinate with a similar team focusing on recovery domains in California.

We appreciate your interest and assistance in this important effort. Please forward your nominations to Michael Ford at the NMFS Northwest Fisheries Science Center (2725 Montlake Blvd. East, Seattle, WA, 98112) or by email to [Nwfsc.Rist@noaa.gov](mailto:Nwfsc.Rist@noaa.gov) by November 9, 2007. To facilitate the evaluation, please provide a Curriculum Vitae for each nominee, and a short explanation of how the nominee meets the selection criteria. Self-nomination is acceptable.

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Ford at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (206-860-5612). Additional information on recovery planning for West Coast salmon is also available on the internet at <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Salmon-Recovery-Planning/index.cfm> and <http://www.nwfsc.noaa.gov/trt/index.cfm>.

Very truly yours,



D. Robert Lohn  
Administrator  
Northwest Region



Usha Varanasi, Ph.D.  
Science and Research Director  
Northwest Fisheries Science Center

