

Summary Sheet

Meeting dates: February 8-9, 2019

Agenda item: Puget Sound Steelhead Advisory Group Briefing

Presenter(s): Advisory Group Panel & Jim Scott, Special Assistant

Background summary:

In 2017 the Puget Sound Steelhead Advisory Group embarked on an unprecedented task - to develop a portfolio of watershed-specific conservation, fishery, and hatchery strategies for Puget Sound steelhead. It was not an easy task. Puget Sound steelhead returns are less than 5-10% of the historical level, and our passion for steelhead had often led to bitter disagreements on the path forward.

But what we have in common that transcends our many differences is an abiding love of Puget Sound steelhead, the magnificent rivers they inhabit, and the opportunity to fish for them in our home waters.

That shared passion has brought us together to build a path to a brighter future for Puget Sound steelhead and steelhead anglers. A future in which wild steelhead are no longer threatened with extinction and are healthy enough to support fishing. A future in which the rich tradition of steelhead fishing is continued and passed on to future generations.

But through more than two years of meetings, more than forty presentations from steelhead experts, and hundreds of hours of challenging discussions, we built a broad consensus for a portfolio of proactive management strategies and actions.

We have come together, and are now asking for your help. Please support the funding, monitoring, and other actions needed to initiate the portfolio, conserve wild steelhead, and restore fishing opportunities.

Staff recommendation:

Staff have worked closely with the PSSAG and support agency consideration of the recommendations.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

Upon receiving the final report, the PSSAG requests Director Susewind consider the portfolio of steelhead rivers in Puget Sound and, as appropriate, pursue funding and resources necessary to support fishery implementation, stock monitoring, and enhanced habitat restoration and protection.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

The new funding necessary to implement the PSSAG recommendations is included in the Governor's budget requests, except that an additional \$800,000 is requested to implement a pilot program using sonar to more accurately count returning adult steelhead, a critical piece of information for effective steelhead management.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

Not applicable

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Staff propose initiating public review of the recommendations upon receipt of the final PSSAG report.

Draft motion language:

Post decision communications plan:

Not applicable
