



October 20, 2000

To People Working to Save Salmon in Puget Sound:

Wild salmon and bull trout are in trouble in the Puget Sound region. Populations are a small fraction of what they once were and some are nearing extinction. While the needs of the fish are straightforward – an adequate supply of clean water, properly functioning spawning and rearing habitat, and a sufficient number of adult salmon returning to spawn – providing these basic requirements is perhaps one of the most challenging environmental problems ever faced in the Pacific Northwest.

In the fall of 1999, over 150 private sector and local, state, federal and tribal government leaders gathered to discuss the growing salmon crisis. These private and public sector leaders identified a common vision for Puget Sound salmon: healthy Puget Sound ecosystems to produce and support salmon at a level that will once again sustain ceremonial, subsistence, and commercial fisheries. But these salmon leaders also determined that without a Shared Strategy, without a common road map to lead the region, the means to recover and protect wild salmon and their habitats will be inefficient at best, ineffective at worst.

A group of federal, state, local, and tribal leaders answered the call for a shared strategy by developing the enclosed draft *Shared Strategy for Recovery of Salmon in Puget Sound*. Structured around six planning steps to establish recovery goals and actions necessary to achieve them, the Strategy incorporates the need for local decision-making with Puget Sound-wide standards and planning. With the leadership and partnership of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, state agencies, the Governor's Office, local governments, and Puget Sound Indian tribes, the Strategy aims to fulfill the region's obligations under the Endangered Species Act and be consistent with treaty rights.

We seek your comments, questions, and support to make the draft Shared Strategy *the* strategy for returning healthy wild salmon runs to Puget Sound. We need your help in ensuring the Shared Strategy provides a workable framework and process for collaborative recovery planning. While we invite and encourage feedback on the entire draft document, we are particularly interested in how we can improve the clarity of the planning steps and the feasibility of the timelines.

Based on your comments, we will revise the draft document and gather salmon leaders in January to finalize the Shared Strategy and launch the effort. A steering committee is being formed to propose an organizational structure for the Shared Strategy process and to organize the January gathering.

Please provide us with your comments on the Shared Strategy by December 1, 2000. There is a comment form included with this packet that you can fill out and return to the address listed on the form. ***You may also direct your comments and questions to Gail Gatton (206. 447.1805) or Jim Kramer (206. 706.7289). Additionally, the document is posted to our website at <http://www.sharedsalmonstrategy.org> which includes an electronic method for sending your comments, should you so choose.***

Please also feel free to direct your questions to members of the workgroup that supported our effort to prepare the draft strategy. These members include: Teresa Scott, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; Jeff Chan, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Charles Stringer, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission; Steve Leider, Governor's Salmon Office; Lloyd Moody, Governor's Salmon Office; Steve Nicholas, King County; Jay Watson, Hood Canal Coordinating Council; Elizabeth Babcock, NMFS; and Mary Ruckelshaus, NMFS.

Thank you for your time and efforts to make the Shared Strategy succeed.

Sincerely



Bill Ruckelshaus, Chair
Shared Strategy Effort



Donna Darm, Acting Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service



Billy Frank, Jr., Chairman
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Ron Sims, Executive
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