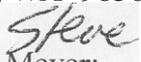




UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
525 NE Oregon Street
PORTLAND, OREGON 97232-2737

June 19, 2003

Steven R. Meyer, Director
State of Washington
Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
Natural Resources Building
PO Box 43135
Olympia, WA 98504-3135


Dear Mr. Meyer:

Thank you for visiting with me in Portland recently. I enjoyed our talk and look forward to working with you and the Governor's Salmon Recovery Office. We discussed your March 17, 2003, letter and agreed on the need for enhanced coordination between our Interior Columbia Basin Technical Recovery Team (TRT) and the State of Washington's local recovery planning efforts. Since your letter, NOAA staff has benefited from constructive discussions with your staff and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife staff on this issue.

We understand that recovery planning efforts are well underway throughout Washington's portion of *the* Interior Columbia Basin, concurrent with sub-basin planning activities. We agree on the need for the TRT process and products to be integrated with state processes, both in substance and in timing.

Your letter leads us to believe that recovery planning would benefit from a forum created for the Washington portion of the Interior Columbia that includes key individuals representing state and federal agencies, tribes and each of Washington's Interior Columbia recovery organizations. This coordinating group should anticipate key policy questions and implications likely to be common among the regional organizations as they use the TRT products; ensure technical products are timely and useful to the members of recovery organizations making the difficult policy decisions; and it should help integrate local products with TRT products.

Additionally, we recognize it is in the best interest of everyone that the TRT take advantage of expertise and local knowledge represented by the current Regional Technical Teams in the Upper Columbia Basin and the Yakima as well as one that is forming in *the* Snake. This helps us form the relationships we have been seeking among TRT members and "local" scientists. This will address your concerns regarding the efficient and timely production and delivery of analyses and products, and also will establish concurrence on approaches among the scientists.



If you agree with this proposal, we recommend that the state initiate this coordination group as soon as possible. The Interior Columbia TRT is making good progress in developing many of its products, so it is important that we begin the integration as soon as possible. Please contact Elizabeth Gaar, 503-230-5434, or Lynn Hatcher, our new recovery coordinator for this area at 509-962-8911 ext 223, for further work on this issue. I look forward to getting together again soon and invite you to call me if I can help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob", is placed over a light gray rectangular background.

Robert G. Walton
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Salmon Recovery