HSRG Comments, RIST Review May 2009

Continued scientific review is critical to making progress towards a better understanding of the effects management actions have on salmon conservation and harvest. The attached review by the RIST is a good example of how constructive review can help draw attention to important questions and uncertainties.

The HSRG sees the RIST review as a strong endorsement of the HSRG principles and an agreement that the HSRG recommendations represent significant improvements over current hatchery management. The HSRG also concurs with the RIST that uncertainty exists in many areas, such as the quantification of fitness loss and the impacts of weirs. On the other hand, the outcomes of models used by the HSRG to establish pHOS and PNI guidelines – which are the foundation of many HSRG recommendations -- are very robust to uncertainties in potential fitness loss (Lynch and O'Hely 2001; Ford 2002). The HSRG welcomes opportunities to work with the RIST and others to develop a research agenda to improve our knowledge in these areas and to continue refinement of our management models.

The HSRG further notes that it is critically important that uncertainties not delay implementation of necessary reforms. Management and recovery of threatened salmon populations must proceed promptly, based upon application of best available scientific information, for achieving long-term goals and desired outcomes. While scientific uncertainties exist now and will in the future, critical actions and decisions must be made while research continues to refine our understanding and quantification of effects.