

**COLUMBIA RIVER SALMON RECOVERY ASSESSMENT**  
**Assessment Interview Questions****Background**

NOAA Fisheries has several obligations in the Columbia River Basin regarding salmon and steelhead recovery and management including requirements for Endangered Species Act (ESA), Tribal treaty and trust responsibilities, and other federal obligations. In order to address these multiple mandates over the long term, NOAA Fisheries would like to better integrate existing and future recovery plans with Basin-wide strategies to address habitat, hydropower, harvest, hatchery and other elements of recovery.

Given the large number of parties involved in the Columbia Basin recovery effort, a high level of planning, coordination and collaboration is necessary. NOAA Fisheries has engaged Oregon Consensus and the Ruckelshaus Center to conduct a situation assessment to explore regional views about what the processes for salmon and steelhead recovery in the Columbia River Basin should look like over the long-term. The Centers will be conducting interviews with representative parties from throughout the Basin to identify a shared understanding of the range of issues and perspectives and to discover potential processes to achieve desired outcomes and address the broad range of interests in the basin.

***Interview Questions***

1. Please tell us about your background, affiliation, involvement and interests with respect to Columbia Basin salmon recovery. Have you been involved in any existing recovery planning efforts?
2. How will you know Columbia Basin salmon recovery process has been successful? What outcomes will you see? What will have happened/not happened 25, 50 or 75 years from now?
3. What do you see as the major issues that need to be addressed in a comprehensive, effective basin-wide recovery plan? How should Basin-wide priorities be considered and discussed with parties?
4. What are the challenges or barriers to addressing these issues?
5. How might these challenges or barriers be overcome? Do you have suggestions for approaches or processes that would be most useful in addressing the above topics and why?
6. What changes if any to the existing processes might you recommend for addressing salmon recovery in the long term? What do you think will happen if the “status quo” continues?
7. Are you aware of, or have you participated in, any processes that you think could in some way serve as a model?
8. How can science best be incorporated into recovery planning?
9. Is there anyone else you think we should be interviewing? Why is it important to speak to him/her?

10. What should we have asked that we did not?

11. Do you have any questions for us?

February 26, 2013

# Columbia Basin Salmon Recovery Situation Assessment

## What is a Situation Assessment?

A situation assessment is an interview-based information-gathering process undertaken to better understand issues and interests of involved parties and situation dynamics related to a complex public policy issue. Information gathered may include:

- What are the issues and opportunities?
- Who are the key parties and what are their interests?
- What are the current processes and avenues for addressing those issues and interests?
- What options could be helpful to address those interests and what parameters would help ensure the greatest likelihood for success?

Typically, such an assessment involves a neutral, third-party who interviews a range of affected and potentially affected individuals to understand the interests and substantive issues that need to be addressed, as well as the likely challenges, barriers and opportunities for moving forward.

The third party uses information from interviewees to identify cross-cutting themes, challenges and opportunities. Information gained is given freely and analyzed without bias. All interviews are confidential and no input is attributed to interviewees by name or affiliation.

At the conclusion of the interviews, the Centers will provide a summary report that identifies key issues, themes and options that might be useful in the long term. This report will be available to everyone who participated in the assessment and other interested parties. The procedural options that are identified by a situation assessment are meant to inform, rather than dictate a particular course of action. While the assessment will include a list of who was interviewed, specific statements and key themes will not be attributed to individual interviewees.

## What are the Oregon Consensus and William D. Ruckelshaus Center

Oregon Consensus (OC) is Oregon's official program for public policy consensus building. OC provides consensus building, facilitation, mediation and other conflict resolution services to public entities and their stakeholders in Oregon and throughout the Northwest. OC is a program of the National Policy Consensus Center in Portland State University's Hatfield School of Government. OC's mission is to promote effective and efficient approaches for collaborative governance on public policy issues in Oregon. OC offers state agencies, local governments and the public a neutral forum and neutral services.

The William D. Ruckelshaus Center is a neutral resource for collaborative problem solving in the State of Washington and the Pacific Northwest. It is a joint effort of Washington's two research universities and is dedicated to assisting public, private, tribal, non-profit and other community leaders in their efforts to build consensus and resolve conflicts around difficult public policy issues. The Center is hosted at the University of Washington (UW) by the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs and at Washington State University (WSU) by WSU Extension. More information is available at <http://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/>.

Oregon Consensus and the Ruckelshaus Center are both university-based institutions devoted to promoting collaborative governance and consensus-based public policy. Both programs are members of the University Network for Collaborative Governance, a national association of university based centers recognized for their leadership in advancing the best practices for collaborative approaches to resolving public issues. OC and the Ruckelshaus Center have a well-established history of successfully working together on projects with regional impact. The two programs have created an assessment team that utilizes the expertise and resources within each center to implement the assessment process. If you have questions about the assessment process, please contact Project Manager Peter Harkema at (503) 725-8191 or [pharkema@pdx.edu](mailto:pharkema@pdx.edu).