

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE QUEETS RIVER COHO OVERFISHING STATUS REVIEW

Situation: The failure to achieve spawning escapement goals for three consecutive years triggers an overfishing concern under Amendment 14 to the *Pacific Coast Salmon Plan* (implemented September 2000). The Salmon Technical Team (STT) is responsible for determining the status of such a stock and developing recommendations for management measures to ensure the stock is not overfished. The Habitat Steering Group (HSG) is responsible for reviewing the status of essential fish habitat (EFH) for the stock and making recommendations for any needed restoration and enhancement measures. Attachment 1 contains an excerpt from Amendment 14 which details the overfishing concern procedures.

Natural spawning escapements of Queets coho did not fall within the range established as a goal in Amendment 14 (5,800-14,500) for 1997-1999. In addition, the preseason projection for 2000 indicated the stock would again fall short of the established goal. With that information at its June 2000 meeting, the Council requested Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Quinault Indian Nation to take the lead in assembling pertinent data to help the STT complete an assessment of Queets coho by September 2001. At its November 2000 meeting, the Council recommended the STT develop an outline for the status review for the March 2001 Council meeting.

Since the November Council meeting, estimates for the 2000 spawning escapement of Queets coho and abundance projections for 2001 have become available. The current estimates demonstrate that the 2000 return was greater than expected and was within the goal range (8,100 wild and supplemental adults). The 2001 return is expected to be sufficient to also meet the spawning escapement goal this year (see Exhibit B.5, STT Report).

Council Action: Provide direction as necessary to the STT and HSG regarding the assessment of Queets coho.

Reference Materials:

1. Excerpt from the *Pacific Coast Salmon Plan* (2000) (Exhibit B.5, Attachment 1).
2. Salmon Technical Team Report on Queets Coho (Exhibit B.5, STT Report).
3. Exhibit B.5, WDFW Comment.

PFMC
02/21/01