

**INDEPENDENT  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY  
SCIENCE TEAM  
(IMST)**



**State of Oregon**

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April 1, 1999

The Honorable Governor John A. Kitzhaber  
Governor of Oregon  
State Capitol Building  
Salem, OR 97310

The Honorable Brady Adams  
Oregon Senate President  
State Capitol Building  
Salem OR 97310

The Honorable Lynn Snodgrass  
Oregon House Speaker  
State Capitol Building  
Salem OR 97310

I write this letter report about the monitoring program of the Oregon Plan on behalf of the Independent Multidisciplinary Science Team (IMST). Senate Bill 924, Steelhead Supplement (pg. 16-7), and Executive Order No. EO 99-01 requests that the IMST annually review monitoring results and identify where the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds warrants change for scientific or technical reasons and make recommendations to the appropriate agency on adjustments that appear necessary. This letter represents our first report to you as part of this task.

### **Process**

The IMST focused on calendar year 1998 for the purposes of this review. In preparation of this report, the IMST has reviewed the Oregon Plan Annual Report and met three times with Kelly Moore and once with Jim Martin. We have found reasons for significant encouragement, but also experienced considerable frustration when we attempted to discharge our responsibilities. Our review is complicated by the fact that a report from the Interagency Monitoring Team is not yet available. Their report should provide a cohesive and comprehensive report on monitoring. For purposes of the 1998 review, IMST focused on the Oregon Plan Annual Report.

### **Findings**

We found that the first year of implementation of the Monitoring Plan has resulted in some high quality monitoring activity by various State agencies. For various reasons, the monitoring programs of all state agencies are not at the same level of development. For instance, the Oregon Department of Forestry monitoring effort is more extensively developed, reflecting its longevity. In the future, support for monitoring by the Watershed Councils and the Healthy Streams Partnership should be an important part of the monitoring effort.

It remains for IMST to review the monitoring procedures and protocols to determine their scientific adequacy. We expect to accomplish this task from a synthesis document that would be developed by the Teams of the Oregon Plan in 1999. Our goal in this technical review will be to determine if the most relevant monitoring questions are being addressed, and if the procedures being used will provide clear answers to them. In addition, we will evaluate the procedures for data analysis and interpretation, and the methods the agencies are using to incorporate findings into programs of adaptive management.

The progress made in coordinating monitoring activities is encouraging. It shows lots of hard work and diligence of effort; however, much needs to be done. It is a daunting task, which can only be successful with dedication and cooperation from the state agencies in the monitoring program.

The 1998 monitoring program is a mixture of monitoring activities in which the agencies were already engaged, and some enhancements made possible through funding from the 1997 legislature. We feel it is important to integrate the monitoring activities of the agencies. While an aggregation of existing programs is a useful place to start, it will not ensure that progress towards the goals of the Oregon Plan is occurring, or show if adaptive management is needed.

The most pressing need is a long-term commitment for integration, not simply aggregation. It is essential that individual agencies prioritize the questions to be answered via the monitoring program and show how these monitoring activities relate to the goals of the Oregon Plan.

Integration and synthesis of data collected by these studies across agencies is lacking. This integration and synthesis is necessary to understanding the linkages between various monitoring elements, for instance between ocean conditions, on-shore aquatic habitat condition and fish population levels. Currently this is not occurring and there does not appear to be an adequate workforce dedicated to accomplishing this critical task.

## **Recommendations**

Success in the Oregon Plan requires a monitoring program that is geared to the Plan and is effective. In the future the IMST will make a more effective evaluation of the monitoring effort than was possible for 1998.

To achieve these goals we make the following recommendations:

- 1 . The Interagency Monitoring Team organization. The monitoring Teams should be organized to effectively address and prioritize key issues, to identify the highest priority questions that are to be answered by monitoring in the context of the goals of the Oregon Plan, and to implement actions. This will result in prioritization of effort and a shift of focus from the tasks in the monitoring program to the goals to be attained. Tasks need to be adopted to answer the high priority questions. We feel this will encourage cooperation and minimize omissions in the scientific approach.
2. The Interagency Monitoring Team should do the following:

### **Short Term**

- Define what constitutes an annual period in the monitoring program. Is it the calendar year, or would some other 12-month period be more logical?
- Define what constitutes a comprehensive report of the monitoring effort for this period. It seems logical that this might be the Annual Monitoring Report and the synthesis that results from the Interagency Monitoring Conference.
- Establish a schedule for the production of these documents and provide them to the IMST to facilitate our annual review of the monitoring program.
- Provide the IMST with specific questions on which scientific guidance is desired.

### **Long Term**

- Develop and adopt a strategy to ensure integrating and synthesizing of monitoring data collected by the agencies, and relate the output to the goals of the Oregon Plan. We think this is particularly important in understanding the relationships between ocean conditions and onshore aquatic habitat conditions.
  - Encourage cooperation and coordination with the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board and the Watershed Councils.
  - Develop strategies and specific mechanisms to ensure that information from the monitoring program is incorporated into the adaptive management strategies of each agency. Part of this may be various forms of technology transfer. Findings of the Monitoring Team apparently are not being transferred and getting to field level entities responsible for implementing elements of the Oregon Plan (watershed councils, agency field personnel, etc.). We suggest the report for the annual monitoring program should include a section on technology transfer that will facilitate adaptive management actions.
3. The Interagency Monitoring Team has identified ocean and estuarine systems as key components in the Monitoring Plan. These monitoring efforts have not been implemented, yet these environments are a critical part of the habitat.
  4. The Manager of the Oregon Plan should evaluate staffing needs and levels devoted to the oversight, management and integrative and synthetic activities of the monitoring program. The Steelhead Supplement pg. 16-33 lists two staff positions that will be funded to accomplish this task, but our observation is that these are existing staff members that have been assigned these functions on a collateral duty basis. It is our opinion that this has resulted in inadequate staff time to successfully accomplish the task.
  5. The Salmon Core Team should accomplish greater integration and collaboration between federal and state monitoring efforts. The IMST recommends active participation from the Federal Agencies at the Regional and State Office level with

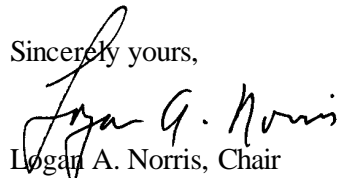
State Agencies. This cooperation is critical to any successful species recovery effort, given that essential habitat occurs on both federal and non-federal lands. Disconnected, uncoordinated individual monitoring strategies simply will not be sufficient to provide adequate information to implement adaptive management on the landscape scales that will be necessary to restore aquatic habitats in the Pacific Northwest. After many meetings and even with agreement to coordinate at the policy level, it is clear that State and Federal Agencies are still not very good at working together. We believe it will likely take a concerted effort by agency executives to ensure this goal is achieved at the operating level.

Oregon is engaged in an unprecedented effort of wild salmonid species recovery. We all are navigating in uncharted waters. The IMST strongly supports the monitoring efforts to date but at the same time are of the opinion that there is room for significant improvement. We hope our review for 1998, and the recommendations we make will be useful to you in meeting this challenge.

### **Key Points**

- **Success in the Oregon Plan requires a long-term monitoring plan that is geared to the Plan, and is effective.**
- **The most pressing need is for greater integration, not just aggregation.**
- **Develop strategies and specific mechanisms to ensure information from the monitoring program is incorporated into the adaptive management strategies of each agency.**

Sincerely yours,



Logan A. Norris, Chair  
Independent Multidisciplinary Science Team

cc: Joint Legislative Committee on Stream Restoration and Species Recovery  
Roy Hemmingway, Oregon Plan Manager  
Kelly Moore, Oregon Plan Monitoring Leader  
IMST