

**INDEPENDENT
ULTIDISCIPLINARY
SCIENCE TEAM
(IMST)**



State of Oregon

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May 26, 2000

Geoff Huntington
Executive Director
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
775 Summer Street NE, Suite 360
Salem OR 97301-1290

Dear Geoff,

A subset of IMST members briefly reviewed the two research proposals on juvenile salmonid survival as you requested.

Our general conclusion is that the research proposed has the potential to provide information that (1) can be incorporated into the policy process (although some scientific interpretation and integration of these results with other information will be required before the information will be fully useful to policy makers), and (2) it will help advance implementation of the Oregon Plan in areas of interest to IMST.

Specifically we make four recommendations - the first two deal with the proposals provided, and the second two deal with the process for science review.

1. Fund only the proposal focusing on the Nehalem. watershed.

This recommendation is based on our assessment that the techniques proposed are in relatively early stages of development and specific experience with them in our context is advised before making additional investments in this area.

2. Request that the investigators determine the degree to which implantation affects the behavior of these fish.

We are concerned that the effect of implantation of the devices on the behavior of the fish is unknown. Without a method for determining that the behavior of implanted fish is essentially the same or very similar to "control" wild fish, the results will subject to criticism that the effects noted are the result of implantation and therefore not representative of what we would expect normally in wild fish.

3. Develop a proposal format requirement that is designed for research. proposals.

With regards to future research proposals to OWEB, we find the format requirements of proposals to OWEB poorly structured for research

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proposals. Some of the difficulty we had in our review reflects the use of the current forms. The time-tested approach to research proposals used by NSF, USDA competitive grants, and many others will better meet the needs of scientific reviewers and ultimately OWEB. These provide the framework in which

- the hypotheses to be tested can be explicitly stated,
- the methods proposed can be given in enough detail for reviewers to determine if they are likely to work (without the reviewers doing a review of the literature),
- investigators explain how they will go from data collection through data analysis to draw anticipated conclusions, and
- the financial, personnel and other resources needed or available for the project can be displayed.

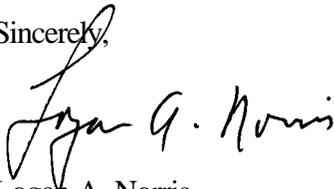
All this information is essential to the quality scientific review called for when expenditures of this magnitude are considered.

4. Expand the scope of science review for research proposals.

The IMST can accommodate review of a limited number of research proposals, but we feel it would be useful for you to request review from others as well. As an example, ODFW has technical staff competent to provide scientific review of these proposals. A broader base of review will reduce the potential for institutional or cultural bias, it will more likely result in detection of areas of weakness or strength, and it will serve to inform others of this impending work. In aggregate this may result in improvements in the proposal and the work., and may result in levels of collaboration with others.

Please let me know if you want clarification of any of these points.

Sincerely,



Logan A. Norris

Chair, Independent Multidisciplinary Science Team

cc: IMST