

Salmon Recovery Funding Board

Individual Comment Form



Lead Entity:	San Juan
Project Number:	15-1239
Project Name:	Population Structure of Chinook Residents - SJI
Project Sponsor:	Long Live the Kings
Grant Manager:	Mike Ramsey

	Date	Status¹
Post-Application	9/23/15	POC
Final	10/28/15	Conditioned

PROJECT SUMMARY *(for Review Panel reference only)*

The proposed assessment will take initial steps to assessing the role of Chinook residency relative to salmon recovery, focusing on the San Juan Islands—marine habitat heavily utilized by resident Chinook. We will determine the natural populations represented, key prey and habitat, what it means to be resident (migration pathways), and whether early marine growth influences resident behavior. Changes in residency over time will also be assessed to further isolate how important residency is to Chinook survival and recovery. Results will fill a significant data gap for San Juan Islands salmon recovery and Puget Sound salmon recovery as a whole. Results will help determine the relative priority of protecting the resident form and what steps, including marine habitat restoration and protection, can be taken to do so. This collaborative effort is a component of the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project.

FINAL REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS

Date: 10/28/15

Final Project Status: **Conditioned**

Review Panel Member(s): Full Review Panel

- 1. If the project is a POC, please identify the SRFB criteria used to determine the status of the project:**
- 2. If the project is Conditioned, the following language will be added to the project agreement:**

The revised final proposal (dated 10/23/15 in the project’s PRISM file) provides further information about how the proposed study will meet the “data gap filling” eligibility requirements for SRFB-funded assessments (Manual 18, page 18). In particular, the response to Item No. 10.A.4 provides a plan and schedule for incorporating the results into WRIA 2 recovery planning through updating the San Juan Chapter of the *Puget Sound Chinook Recovery Plan*. In order to assure the lead entity’s commitment to fully utilizing the study’s results for this purpose, the award of project funding is conditioned as follows.

Prior to signing the grant agreement, the sponsor will provide the RCO grant manager with a letter from the WRIA 2 Lead Entity and the Puget Sound Partnership that 1) explicitly acknowledges the sponsor’s description and schedule for how the results of the study will be integrated with PIAT and incorporated into the local project selection process (as described in Item 10.A.4) and 2) states their commitment to actually carry out the scheduled tasks as described. These letters will be included in the project’s PRISM file.

- 3. Other comments:**

¹ CLEAR: Cleared to proceed; CONDITIONED: Cleared to proceed with a condition; NMI: Needs More Information; POC: Project of Concern; NOTEWORTHY: Exemplary Project

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The review panel believes that the greater potential for this project to fill critical data gaps in the WRIA 2 recovery program is its focus on gaps related to harvest and hatchery management, as described in Objective 4 and Item 10.A of the proposal. We believe that determining prey preferences of resident adult Chinook is of lesser value for filling critical data gaps in WRIA 2's habitat restoration and protection strategy, as kelp beds and the eel grass and gravelly beach spawning habitats of the various forage fish species have already been identified and prioritized as key targets for protection and restoration, and we do not anticipate that the new study will significantly change this priority. The review panel recognizes that the SRFB's salmon grant program does not currently address harvest and hatchery management issues, but we commend the sponsor for including consideration of these issues within the scope of the proposal, and encourage them to use the study results to inform management reforms outside of the project scope.

We believe that this study better fits the intent of the SRFB's regional monitoring project funding program than a SRFB data gap filling assessment. While the project budget exceeds 10% of WRIA 2's current budget allocation, it is well within the regional allowance for monitoring for the Puget Sound Region. While WRIA 2 and Puget Sound Partnership did not choose to frame this project as a regional monitoring study during this funding round, the review panel recommends that they look for opportunities during the course of the study to integrate it with efforts of other WRIsAs in the Puget Sound Region to support a larger regional framework.

POST-APPLICATION REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS

Date: 9/23/15

Project Status: POC

Review Panel Member(s): Full Review Panel

- 1. If the project is a POC, identify the SRFB criteria used to determine the status of the project:**
#18. The project does not clearly lead to project design or does not meet the criteria for filling a data gap. Specifically, the project does not meet all the required elements for filling a data gap in a regional salmon recovery plan or lead entity strategy as identified in Manual #18 Salmon Recovery Grants dated January 2015, under "Planning Projects: Assessment's, Designs, Inventories, and Studies," page 18. In particular, the project does not address the final bullet, which states, "The results must be designed to clearly determine criteria and options for subsequent projects and show the schedule for implementing such projects, if funded."
- 2. If the project is a POC, identify the changes that would make this a technically sound project:**
The results of the study would need to clearly identify criteria and options for subsequent projects, and provide a schedule for implementing such projects to meet the data gap requirement above. Confounding this requirement, the value of this study would not be realized until the contribution of resident Chinook spawning populations from other Puget Sound watersheds is understood. That would require this project to identify "criteria and options for subsequent projects" in the other watersheds and a "schedule for implementing" the future research.
- 3. If the project is Conditioned, the following language will be added to the project agreement:**
- 4. General comments:**
The review panel appreciates the sponsor's responsiveness to comments. The project would provide useful information to help understand the role of resident Chinook among populations in Washington watersheds and

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understand more about the ecology of resident Chinook in marine waters. However, the project does not meet the criteria that the review panel needs to base project reviews on.

The review panel thinks the proposed project would have been an excellent fit for the regional monitoring project funding and is interested to know why that wasn't pursued.



SPONSOR RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS:

If your project is not cleared (i.e. has a status of NMI, Conditioned, or POC) you must update your proposal, PRISM questions, or attachments as necessary to address the review panel's comments. Use track changes when updating your proposal. Fill out the section at the end of your project proposal to document how you responded to comments.

DRAFT APPLICATION / SITE VISIT REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS

Date: June 3, 2015

Project Site Visit?

Yes No

Review Panel Member(s): Paul Schlenger and Tom Slocum

1. Recommended improvements to make this a technically sound project according to the SRFB's criteria:

Justification is needed on how the proposed project meets the "filling a data gap" requirements described in SRFB Manual 18. The proposed research will add information on resident Chinook, but it is not clear how it will tangibly lead to subsequent restoration projects. Provide examples of the types of projects that could potentially come out of the study, including habitat, hatchery, and harvest possibilities. For habitat projects, will the results likely lead to significantly different priorities than the forage fish spawning habitat restoration initiatives that are currently underway? For hatchery and harvest reform possibilities, please provide a commitment and clear pathway for actually implementing whatever recommended reforms may result from the study. Explain how the project fits into the larger context of regional or watershed recovery of Chinook. Clarify if this research topic has been specifically identified in the recovery plan chapter.

Please explain the information available on the contribution of Chinook that spend prolonged portions of their marine life stages in interior waters to the overall populations contributing to the wild production of Chinook in the regions watersheds. Do we have information that indicates resident Chinook are contributing substantially to the overall number of unmarked adult returns to rivers? If the information is not available, explain how the proposed study is the right project to undertake (instead of an analysis on spawning grounds of life history of adult returns) and/or how the study will provide information needed to conduct subsequent spawning ground studies. Describe how "changes in residency over time" will be assessed to isolate how important residency is to Chinook survival and recovery. What information is available on the marked vs. unmarked percentages of resident Chinook caught?

The proposal describes studying how "individuals interact with their environment." Other than diet, what other aspects of the interactions will be studied?

Provide more specificity on the information on "where have resident fish been" that otolith microchemistry and stable isotopes analysis can inform. What type of geographic specificity might be possible from those tools? What type of time period information might be possible? For example, will the analysis be able to inform that an individual spent approximately X months in Puget Sound, Y months in the San Juans/Strait of Juan de Fuca, and Z months in coastal ocean habitats?

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Clarify how data from fishing derbies will be used versus data from the trained and selected angler group. Will the selected anglers be directed to collect data from all size Chinook catches, not just keeper size? The TAG identified a valid concern about quality control of data from these contributors. Please provide more information on your proposed approach to ensure quality data are collected.

The proposal describes the use of the contaminant fingerprint analysis to provide an independent tool to validate the migration patterns identified by otolith microchemistry. This validation is a logical beneficial step in developing a new tool that is more cost effective, but only if the analytical certainty of the fingerprinting is adequately developed. The proposal identified work by O’Neill et al. that identified distinctions between resident Chinook caught in central Puget Sound and ocean migrants. Is there such a distinction for fish in the study area or is it only if the fish have spent a certain amount of time in Central Puget Sound? Given the cost of the contaminant analysis, it appears to only be a cost effective investment if it is certain to provide the validation purpose described.

How was sample size identified for each type of analysis? How many new samples and how many archived samples will be analyzed?

2. **Missing Pre-application information.**

3. **General Comments:**

4. **Staff Comments:**

In Section 10.A. of your Salmon Project Proposal, please cite the reference within the San Juan chapter of the Puget Sound Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan and/or 3 year workplan identifying this assessment as a priority.



SPONSOR RESPONSE INSTRUCTIONS:

Revise your project proposals using “track changes” and update any relevant PRISM questions and attachments. Fill out the section at the end of your project proposal to document how you responded to comments.