

Governance structure for communication and approval of proposed recovery actions

The USFWS, NMFS, MDMR and PIN share a common stewardship interest and responsibility for Atlantic salmon. This partnership based approach, which includes many other non-government organizations, provides benefits for the additional expertise and resources brought to bear on recovery efforts. However, differences in legal authorities, agency procedures, agency protocols, and expertise can often lead to confusion, delays in decision making, and disagreements. The following governance structure is intended to minimize the impacts of these differences among the government entities involved in efforts to recover Atlantic salmon and to maintain a high level of timely and effective communication among these government entities and non-government organizations, including industry and the general public.

Purpose:

The purpose of this Governance Structure is to: 1) ensure that recovery of the Gulf of Maine DPS as defined in the final listing rule is achieved in a manner that is transparent and easily understood in terms of roles and responsibilities of the government entities; 2) ensure that the best available science is being integrated into recovery; 3) ensure that resources are made available to implement those actions or measures agreed to in any given cycle; 4) serve as dispute resolution and continuity of operations throughout the operational year; 5) ensure horizontal and vertical communication amongst the agencies and the various organization levels within the agencies; and (6) ensure that the trust responsibilities of the federal fisheries agencies to federally recognized tribes are appropriately exercised.

Description of the Governance Structure:

The Atlantic Salmon Recovery Program governance structure entails three basic levels; a policy level, management level, and the implementation or action level. These will be referred to as the Policy Board, the Management Board, and Action Teams respectively.

Policy Board

The purpose of the Policy Board is to: (1) Set broad policy direction; (2) Annually reaffirm priorities; (3) Commit resources for recovery implementation. The members of the Policy Board include: the USFWS Regional Director; National Marine Fisheries Service Regional Administrator; Maine Department of Marine Resources Commissioner; Penobscot Indian Nation Representative

Management Board

The purpose of the Management Board is to: (1) Provide annual updates of potential and real changes to resource commitments; and (2) Resolve disagreements among the Action Teams. The members of the Management Board include: the USFWS Assistant Regional Director for Fisheries, the National Marine Fisheries Service Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, Maine Department of Marine Services Sea-run Fisheries and Habitat Division Director, and a Tribal Representative.

Action Teams

The purpose of the Action Teams is to: (1) Develop 5 year implementation plans; (2) Receive and review proposals for recovery actions; (3) Identify and resolve areas of policy or scientific disagreement; (4) Coordinate across teams to increase efficiency and maintain effective communication; and (5) Oversee, implement and monitor recovery actions. The Action Teams will be composed of individuals from the state, federal and tribal government agencies. Action Teams can bring in additional technical expertise or advice for review of recovery actions.

Final approval or rejection of recovery action proposals will be made by the Action Team Chairs (6) based on the recommendations of their team members. Proposals that do not secure consensus with regard to approval or rejection will be sent to the Management Board members (4) to determine final approval or rejection.

Under this Governance Structure, Action Teams will focus on the areas of: maintaining and operating the Atlantic salmon conservation hatcheries, maintaining and increasing the genetic diversity of hatchery and wild stocks, enhancing habitats and maximizing the survival of hatchery stocks and increasing the abundance of wild salmon smolts in the freshwater environment, maximizing the connectivity of freshwater and marine habitats, and understanding and increasing survival of Atlantic salmon in the marine and estuarine environments. The effectiveness of this proposed governance structure will be reviewed annually and may be adapted as needed to assist in meeting the recovery goals for Atlantic salmon in the GOM DPS.