



**CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM**

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April 12, 1996

Wiley Horne, Chairman
Category III Steering Committee
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
P. O. Box 54153
Los Angeles, CA 90054-0153

Dear Mr. Horne:

Please allow me to elaborate on the logic behind our suggestion that the Category III program emphasize efforts to restore Spring Run Chinook Salmon in its 1996 funding program.

Spring-run Chinook Salmon represent a significant biological legacy of Pacific salmon populations and are an important element of the biodiversity associated with Central Valley rivers, streams and the Delta.

Spring-run Chinook Salmon are a species of special concern which are currently being evaluated for candidacy as a state threatened or endangered species. Spring-run Chinook Salmon are also a renewable resource that can be successfully returned to levels of abundance within the presently limited available habitat. The substantially increased numbers of spring-run Chinook that returned to spawn in 1995 are evidence that this race of salmon retains sufficient resilience to respond to favorable conditions in its natal and rearing habitat and favorable ocean conditions.

Factors which limit the production and survival of spring-run Chinook Salmon have been documented and plans for their recovery have been prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (The Draft Anadromous Fisheries Recovery Plan) and by the California Department of Fish and Game (Restoring Central Valley Streams and States of Actions to Restore Central Valley Spring-Run Chinook Salmon).

Watershed conservancies have been formed on most of the remaining spring-run streams. The potential for consensus-based, locally developed programs to implement recovery plans is very strong. Partnerships between local landowners, land and water managers and governmental or private agencies are welcome and likely to succeed.

CALFED Agencies

California

The Resources Agency
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Water Resources
California Environmental Protection Agency
State Water Resources Control Board

Federal

Environmental Protection Agency
Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Reclamation
Department of Commerce
National Marine Fisheries Service

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Much of the reduction of productivity in streams that currently support spring-run Chinook Salmon has occurred gradually over a long period of time. The loss of spring-run populations is not attributable to any one action, but rather the accumulation of many impacts over time.

Spring-run Chinook may not benefit substantially from the improvements to Delta outflow arising from the December 15, 1994 Accord. Spring-run are an important focus of the CALFED Bay-Delta long-term planning program.

Many of the actions required to restore spring-run Chinook Salmon productivity center around the need to screen water diversions and to provide improved access to spawning habitat. These actions fit into the priorities of the Category III program.

The results of improvements to spring-run Chinook Salmon habitat should be evident relatively quickly. They should be measurable under existing monitoring programs and the program anticipated under the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Comprehensive Assessment and Monitoring Program.

Finally, spring-run Chinook are one heck of a good sport fish and it would make a lot of people happy to know that the water users, local landowners and governmental agencies worked together to restore harvestable populations for sustained sport and commercial use.

We hope this clarifies our logic behind our suggestion to focus Category III funds in 1996 on the restoration of spring-run Chinook Salmon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dick Daniel", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Dick Daniel, Assistant Director
Habitat Restoration

cc David Bernard