



December 13, 2008

Governor Chris Gregoire
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire;

The Wild Steelhead Coalition (WSC), an organization dedicated to the restoration of our state fish - the steelhead – to the waters of the northwest, is hereby recommending to the Governor that in taking her decision for appointment to the position of Director of Washington's Department of Fish and Wildlife that the following issues be considered:

1. The appointee show equal interest in the recovery of diminished naturally occurring salmonid populations in the State's waters as be shown to commercial harvest;
2. Have a strong desire to protect and/or restore the quality of habitat necessary to the maintenance of wild salmonid populations and the freshwater, estuary, and marine ecosystems they are a crucial part of;
3. Understand the need for healthy and improving fish runs as is necessary for the strengthening and support of the area's sport fishing industry (a sport caught fish generates far more revenue than a commercially harvested fish);
4. Have, in general, an environmentally oriented outlook toward the operation and management of the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

In the past we have lost ground with regard to maintaining or improving the conditions necessary for sustaining robust and healthy runs of many species of salmonids in our state. In particular the status of wild steelhead has declined due to widespread habitat degradation, poor hatchery practices, and misguided harvest management, all of which have contributed to long-term declines in the abundance, distribution, diversity and productivity for Washington's wild steelhead.

As the state is currently in the process of preparing regional management plans for steelhead, the new Director should be a person who will provide strong vision and leadership in generating a plan that will indeed lead to the recovery of one of the world's great game fish. Wild steelhead, the Washington State fish, possess qualities that demonstrate characteristics of durability, strength and tenacity that represent those of the people that make Washington their home state.

In closing, members of the Wild Steelhead Coalition ask that careful consideration be given to the selection of the new head of the WDFW to select someone with a strong environmental and conservation oriented attitude.

Respectfully;

Wild Steelhead Coalition
Rich Simms
President

Cc: Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission