

150 Years of Salmon Restoration: *Assorted Truths*

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Society has been trying to restore PNW wild salmon for 150 years

- 1848 start of decline
- Restoration efforts started almost immediately
- Long-term trajectory is important
- Recognition that policy problem has long history

What are the lessons learned from the 150 years of experience?

- Science — *what role does it play?*
- Political process — *how does it work?*
- Society's aspirations — *how translated into decisions?*
- Organizations — *how do they work in salmon restoration?*

Points of reference for this talk

- Policy **relevant**, but policy **neutral**
- No advocacy of any policy option

- *Opinions are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of any organization*

1. Policy goals are fleeting in salmon restoration

- 1900 — *could 2000 have been predicted?*
- 2100 — *likely to dramatically different than now*
- Publicly stated goals — *often not real goals*
- Societal goals — *every interest area has credible goals*
- ESA — *what are the operational goals?*

2. Time scales of the principal players rarely coincide in salmon restoration

- Salmon response — *50↔100 years is realistic*
- Political response — *2↔4 years*
- Ocean changes — *20↔30 years*
- Performance evaluation — *5↔8 years vs. 50↔100 years*

3. Scientists are essential, but are still supporting players in salmon restoration

- Scientists are needed — *but are not essential*
- Scientific imperative — *does not exist for restoration*
- Even with complete knowledge — *many decisions remain*
- Scientists are valuable allies — *watch the dark side*

4. Optimization in salmon restoration is naïve

- Managers preoccupied with optimal or efficient solution
- MSY or even OSY to overexploitation
- Tend to create “pressure” good times

5. Reality in salmon restoration is often an orphan

- Example of chicken and fox parable
- How is information provided that does inherently advocate?
- Is “good” news rewarded in policy analysis?
- Is “bad” news rewarded in research?
- Example of pressure to spin information toward optimism

Conclusions and a challenge

- Are these the right truths?
- Will they apply through this century?
- Challenge for using adaptive management
- *What is the likely outcome if the adopted adaptive management restoration plan does NOT address these truths?*