**ESA Coverage of Listed Steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) in Puget Sound Salmon and**

**Steelhead Fisheries**

Amilee Wilson, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), 510 Desmond Drive SE, Suite

103, Lacey, WA 98503 USA, Amilee.Wilson@noaa.gov.

The Puget Sound Steelhead Distinct Population Segment (DPS) was listed as “threatened”

under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) on May 11, 2007. NMFS issued protective

regulations for Puget Sound steelhead on September 25, 2008. Under the 4(d) Rule in 2008

and 2010, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Puget Sound

Indian Tribes (PSIT) through the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission (NWIFC)

submitted a joint resource management plan (JRMP) for steelhead harvest in Puget Sound.

In 2010 and 2011 under ESA Section 7, co‐managers worked with NOAA Fisheries to obtain

authorization for steelhead harvest under the Puget Sound Chinook Harvest Biological

Opinion. All Puget Sound steelhead fisheries are restrictive and incidental mortality is

minimal. Steelhead mortality occurs mainly in terminal recreational fisheries using mark-release regulations to target hatchery fish, or incidentally in state and tribal commercial net fisheries targeting more abundant species of salmon. Limited tribal steelhead harvest, reported through fish tickets, also occurs for ceremonial and subsistence purposes. Recreational catch is reported through the WDFW catch record card system; retention of Puget Sound wild steelhead in recreational fisheries is prohibited. Harvest is currently approved at no more than 4.2 percent for ESA‐listed winter steelhead in the Skagit, Snohomish, Green, Puyallup and Nisqually rivers. This harvest rate is comparable with rates previously approved for steelhead in the Columbia River basin. For other Puget

Sound basins where data are limited, steelhead fisheries must remain within the harvest

limits observed during the time period reflective of the 2000/2001 through 2006/2007

steelhead seasons.