PROPOSED DRAFT POLICY LANGUAGE:

COOPERATIVELY OPERATED REARING PROGRAMS FOR SALMON AND ~~STEELHEAD~~ ANADROMOUS RAINBOW TROUT

It is the policy of the Fish and Game Commission that:

I. The State's salmon and ~~steelhead~~ anadromous rainbow trout (also known as steelhead) resources may be used to support cooperative rearing programs. Rearing programs may be of ~~two~~ three types: 1) those that grow fish ~~for use in~~ intended to accelerate~~ing~~ the restoration/rehabilitation of depleted wild or naturally spawning populations ~~in underseeded habitat and~~, 2) those that are dedicated solely to growing fish for harvest, and 3) those that grow fish to be used in educational programs.

The following constraints apply to ~~both types~~ cooperative rearing programs:

A. Only those fish surplus to the needs of the Department's programs shall be utilized for such programs and allocation shall be based on past performance and the Department's evaluation of the potential of proposed new programs.

B. Implementation and operation of cooperative rearing programs shall be consistent with State and Federal recovery plans for salmonids that occur within the affected watersheds.

C. Cooperative rearing programs shall use broodstock from within the basin to which juveniles will be stocked to maintain the genetic integrity of natural stocks. Fish raised in these programs shall not be stocked in, ~~or~~ and broodstock ~~captured~~ shall not be taken from, waters where the Department has determined that adverse effects to native fish populations or other aquatic species may result.

D. Cooperative rearing program operations shall be consistent with all other Department and Fish and Game Commission salmon and anadromous rainbow trout policies.

E. Programs that propose to propagate state- or federally- listed salmon or anadromous rainbow trout shall conform to guidelines for establishment and operation of recovery hatchery programs found in the Recovery Strategy for California Coho Salmon, Appendix H.

F. The suitability and acceptance or rejection of proposed programs shall be determined by the Department, after reviewing a written ~~proposal~~ project and management plan. ~~A written project and management plan providing for evaluation and covering a period of five years must be evaluated and approved by the Department.~~ The written project and management plan shall include a clear statement of project goals and performance standards and shall cover a period of five years, and must be evaluated and approved by the Department. Five-year plans shall conform to guidelines in Appendix B of the California Stream Habitat Restoration Manual. The suitability and acceptance or rejection of proposed programs shall be determined by the Department, after reviewing the written proposal. Prior to reauthorizing a program's five year management plan, the Department must evaluate the program's compliance ~~that the project has been in~~ with its current approved plan and determine that continuance of the program is in the best interest of the State's fishery resources.

G. Programs will contain a monitoring component and will submit an annual performance report to the Department. An annual operational permit is required and issuance will be evaluated on documented success of the program at meeting fishery management and program goals. Broodstock collection and juvenile releases will be coordinated with and authorized by the Department with the annual operational permit.

H. Cooperative rearing programs that produce salmonids that have access to the ocean shall have in place a marking program, developed in cooperation with and approved by the Department, prior to the release of any fish[1]. All coded wire tagged fish shall also receive an external mark in the form of an adipose fin clip. Using coded wire tag data, the Department will evaluate stray rates from these programs to determine whether they are unacceptably high in natural areas especially as compared to the stray rates of trucked fish. Salmon reared for the express purpose of supplying fish for educational programs are exempt from the above requirements.

I. All costs of the program, including costs for routine care, ~~and~~ food ~~costs~~, tagging, and monitoring of program effectiveness, shall be the financial responsibility of the sponsoring entity. The Department shall provide technical advice and special assistance as appropriate.

J. Programs will be operated, in the judgment of the Department, to avoid genetic, behavioral, and ecological impacts on native stocks and to conserve existing levels and patterns of genetic diversity of natural salmon and anadromous rainbow trout populations.

K. Prior to release, and at any other time deemed necessary by the Department, fish raised by a cooperative program may be examined by the Department to determine that they are not infected with any disease which, in the opinion of the Department, may be detrimental to the State's fishery resources.

II. The bulk of the state's salmon and ~~steelhead~~ anadromous rainbow trout resources shall be produced naturally. The State's goals of maintaining and increasing natural production and maintenance of genetic integrity of salmon and anadromous rainbow trout runs take precedence over the goals of cooperatively operated rearing programs.

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[1] Example guidelines are: Cooperative rearing programs that produce less than 100,000 Chinook salmon annually, where those fish have access to the ocean, shall mark 100% of all fish released with a unique coded wire tag. Cooperative rearing programs that produce 100,000 or more Chinook salmon annually, where those fish have access to the ocean, shall mark at least 20% of all fish released with a unique coded wire tag. Using coded wire tag data, the Department will evaluate stray rates from these programs to determine whether they are unacceptably high in natural areas especially as compared to the stray rates of trucked fish.