



**Norton Sound Economic
Development Corporation**

*Fisheries Research
& Development*

Serving the fisheries of the Bering Strait Region

Brevig Mission Diomede Elim Gambell Golovin Koyuk Nome Saint Michael Savoonga Shaktoolik Stebbins Teller Unalakleet Wales White Mountain

March 24, 2010

Ron Josephson

Dear Ron,

I hope that you have seen our mist incubation and eyed egg implant permit applications for the coming summer. Once again our proposals are quite limited in scope and very much focused on the rehabilitation of local depleted stocks of salmon. In the case of the Solomon River chum and the Anvil Creek coho salmon stocks, the projects are intentionally limited due to the limited nature of the habitat within the watershed. In the case of the Snake River chum salmon stock our proposal is larger due to the larger nature of the watershed. You may be aware of the fact we were unable to take any eggs in 2009 and that in 2008 our permit was pulled for the Snake River chum salmon stock. Ironic, in that the Snake River chum are listed as a "Stock of Concern" and as such are a top priority for rehabilitation. I believe our project offers the most viable tool for the stock's recovery. Yet, because this is an experimental project we can only work with the stock when it will attain its escapement goal. When the project was just starting out five years ago this may have been prudent. With the successful returns documented on the 2004 Hastings Creek chum egg plant and the 2005 Anvil Creek coho egg plant, the hard line policy of no egg takes until the escapement goal is attained is short sighted.

NSED has been active in salmon rehabilitation projects since 1996. Our initial participation was in the Salmon Lake fertilization project, cooperating with the Department and BLM. Today we have assumed financial responsibility for the entire project. We had involvement with the Department's early attempts at salmon rehabilitation with in-stream incubation boxes and as a result of that were tapped as a surrogate Aquaculture Association. A group from Elim attempted to establish an Aquaculture Association but could not find sufficient financial support and eventually failed. Again NSED assumed the role of aquaculture association. In 2006, the Regional Planning Team met to update the Regional Comprehensive Management Plan. Three biologists with the Department and three NSED biologists met and seemingly made progress on factual updates of project work in the Regional Comprehensive Management Plan and a work plan for the coming field season. Within the week, the former Regional Supervisor with Commercial Fisheries AYK informed us that all agreements not made with him were null. The RPT has not met again because it no longer has any standing. NSED continues to work with salmon rehabilitation both with lake fertilization and egg planting. We attend Department staff meetings, when invited, but rarely find the expertise to discuss our projects or future plans.

NSED is in the process of preparing a Mist Incubation and Eyed Egg Planting Culture Manual. We intend to follow with an addendum to explain the selection process for selecting suitable stock specific sites for the planting of salmon in this region. We are reviewing options for taking this project to the next step and actually rehabilitate stocks. We believe we could make significant contributions to rehabilitating the Norton Sound Chinook and chum salmon stocks of concern.

We would also like to investigate formally assuming the role of Regional Aquaculture Association for this region. In addition, we would like to extend an offer to re-engage in a Regional Planning Team process to review the Regional Comprehensive Salmon Plan (as it is up for review this year).

We look forward to a meaningful, productive and collaborative process.

Sincerely, Charles Lean