

*Appendix 7*  
*Correspondence with Expert Reviewers*



August 18, 2009

Re: Invitation to participate in "Expert Rating" of California salmon and steelhead populations

Dear Expert Reviewer:

I am writing to invite your participation in one of three round table discussions of California (CA) salmon populations taking place the week of August 31 - September 4, 2009. The purpose of each meeting is to review the abundance, productivity, and diversity of CA salmon populations to identify salmon strongholds in the state. California Trout, Trout Unlimited and Wild Salmon Center have initiated this project in CA as part of a larger initiative, the North America Salmon Stronghold Partnership (NASSP), which is being led by a consortium of state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, and tribes.

As an expert with unique knowledge of the biological characteristics of several CA salmon and steelhead populations, we hope you will join this process by providing your expertise to help us enhance the Stronghold Partnership's population database. This database will be used to identify "Core Salmon Strongholds" distributed throughout four CA ecoregions. Your name was identified as a potential participant by the project's steering committee, which includes:

- Dan Free, NOAA
- Nick Hetrick, USFWS
- Wendy Millet, TNC
- Jay Nicholas, WSC
- Kevin Shaffer, CDFG
- Tom Weseloh, CalTrout
- Jack Williams, TU

Meetings are scheduled for: Arcata (August 31); Davis (Sept 2); and San Luis Obispo (Sept 3). Please find enclosed a one page summary of the watersheds and populations that will be discussed at each meeting (See "Which meeting should I attend?").

INTERNATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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## Additional Background

The North American Salmon Stronghold Partnership is a voluntary initiative intended to supplement existing ecosystem protection and restoration efforts by providing leadership, enhanced coordination, and public and private resources to support science-based, locally supported conservation actions in salmon strongholds. Currently NASSP is engaged in the process of identifying “core” salmon Strongholds from California through Alaska. (See attached “Stronghold Classification Framework” for additional information on “core” and “contributing” strongholds.) The expert rating scores provided for CA, OR, ID, and WA will provide the foundation for Stronghold identification in these four states. (The methodologies for stronghold identification are currently under development for populations in British Columbia and Alaska.)

The process now underway in CA follows a similar process undertaken by the Wild Salmon Center during 2007 and 2008 in CA, OR, WA, and ID. This early work tested the expert interview methodology and scoring criteria, and yielded a preliminary screening of the strongest remaining salmon and steelhead populations in the lower 48. The intent of the current series of “expert” interviews is to validate and supplement data collected during the initial polling. This series of interviews with CA salmon and steelhead experts is expected to considerably strengthen the accuracy of stronghold identification by substantially increasing the number of experts interviewed and adding to the number of populations that are rated.

## Process and Outcomes

1. On the enclosed “Population Rating Worksheet”, experts will score the salmon and steelhead populations for which they have sufficient expertise (see “Scoring Instructions”). Scores will be provided for three criteria: a) viability, b) wildness, and c) diversity. (See “Database Scoring and Criteria Summary” for explanations of these criteria). Experts will submit their scores to Tom Miewald (contact information provide below) week prior to meetings on **August 25, 2009**.
2. Experts will meet during the week of August 31 – September 4 to discuss, review, and finalize scores. In addition to collaborating on reviews of specific populations, experts will discuss appropriate ecoregional and/or ESU delineations that may be applicable to Core Stronghold analyses in CA. This analysis will follow the scoring process.
3. Wild Salmon Center and CalTrout staff will analyze scores provided by experts and produce new maps displaying scores of salmon and steelhead populations.
4. New scores will provide the basis for identifying core Salmon Strongholds by ecoregions, ESU, and/or similar unit as is most meaningful to long term conservation of anadromous salmonids.

On behalf of all the partners engaged in this effort, I would like to thank you for your participation in this process. The result, identification of the strongest remaining salmon and steelhead populations distributed across CA, will be a key element of long-term efforts to both protect and recover these magnificent fish from California through Alaska.

*Please RSVP the meeting(s) that you will attend to Trozell Weaver at [tweaver@wildsalmoncenter.org](mailto:tweaver@wildsalmoncenter.org) or 971-255-5560.*

If you have questions about this process and/or scoring populations, please contact WSC's Conservation Planner, Tom Miewald, [tmiewald@wildsalmoncenter.org](mailto:tmiewald@wildsalmoncenter.org) (971-255-5556) or myself (503-222-1804).

Sincerely,

Jay Nicholas  
WSC, NASSP Coordinator

Enclosures:

- Population Rating Worksheet
- Scoring Instructions & Deadline
- Database Scoring and Criteria Summary
- Ecoregional Approach Summary
- Stronghold Classification Summary
- "Which Meeting Should I Attend?"
- Population and Basin Maps