<u>Insights on the Recovery Plan process from the Steller sea lion Recovery Team</u>

Ensure each member of the team fully understands the recovery plan process

- Why is a plan needed?
- What information goes into the different sections of the plan, and how do all the sections form a cohesive document that promotes recovery?
- Once completed, how will the plan be used?
- Where is there flexibility in drafting the plan (e.g., assessing the threats, organization of recovery actions) vs. where are there strict requirements (e.g., must include recovery criteria)?

Maintain the independence of your team, while understanding what the USFWS is expecting from the team

How will you assess the threats?

- When does a factor that influences the population become a THREAT?
- Should 'natural' factors (i.e., regime shifts) be considered threats? Should natural and anthropogenic factors be assessed in the same manner?
- What method will you employ to assess threats?
- How will you account for interactions among threats?

Determine how you will develop and justify the recovery criteria

- Will a PVA be conducted for evaluating a biological (quantitative) criterion? If yes, what standard will be used; e.g., 1% in 100 years. Do you believe in quasi-extinction?
- If a PVA will not be conducted, what rationale or standard will be used to evaluate criteria?

Recovery Actions: Link back to the threats, specific actions that should provide essential information and reduce the uncertainty.

MISC.

- How will you make decisions – majority vote? Do you need a quorum present to vote?
- What type of information can be used in preparing the plan; e.g., only published literature? Or, any available document is fair game – so long as the team agrees?
- Consider establishing an intra-net site for internal document distribution among team members.
- Focus on the big picture
- Don't forget the ecosystem – Joint USFWS & NMFS ecosystem policy, pertains to recovery plans
- Keep an open mind
- Don't forget, the Chairman is always right