

# 2007 NOAA Fisheries Employee of the Year Nomination Narrative

**Nominee's Name: Last, First, Middle:**

Dickhoff, Walton, W.

**Nomination Category:**

Supervisor

Dr. Walton W. Dickhoff is nominated as Employee of the Year for 2007 (Supervisor) for his exceptional scientific vision and leadership, contributions to human resource management at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC), and efforts to foster relationships with other NOAA line offices and NOAA Fisheries constituents. Walt has worked for NOAA at the NWFSC since 1986. He is currently the Director of the Resource Enhancement and Utilization Technologies (REUT) Division, which may be the most diverse in the NWFSC. Research within the REUT Division ranges from studies of microorganisms that affect human health to hatchery reform. To add to the daily challenges of directing this diverse division, personnel are split between the Montlake Laboratory and Manchester Research Station. In 2007, the Division included permanent and term NOAA employees, as well as contractors, NRC postdoctoral fellows, collaborators from the University of Idaho, University of Washington, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Tribal agencies, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, non-governmental organizations involved in salmon and marine fish recovery, and student interns.

Below are examples of how Walt has a) demonstrated exceptional leadership, development of the workforce, and/or program management, b) strengthened ties to other NOAA elements or NOAA Fisheries constituents, and c) significantly enhanced staff morale or inspired NOAA Fisheries workforce to excel in the performance of their duties.

**Contributions during 2007-** Walt's notable contributions during 2007 are largely his leadership roles in development of Center- and Agency- wide programs. These exemplify the breadth of his scientific knowledge, exceptional leadership skills, and holistic, positive management style.

*Scientific leadership:*

- Lead role in Seafood Safety Initiative, and authorship of an article titled " The Seafood "Dilemma"- A Way Forward " in Fisheries, Vol. 32 pg 244-246
- Lead role in writing NOAA Seafood Science FAQ sheet
- Chaired NOAA-Fisheries Biotechnology Working group and lead author of Biotechnology Initiative for NOAA-Fisheries
- Worked with NEFSC in development of Center of Excellence for Sustainable Aquaculture for NOAA-Fisheries
- Represented the NWFSC at the National Aquaculture Summit meeting
- Lead role in development and completion of the Interagency Implementation Plan for NOAA's Ocean's and Human Health Initiative
- Served as an alternate on Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology
- Lead in developing hatchery reform research for BIOP funding
- Co-organized symposium on "Six Decades of Fishery Genetics Research"
- Maintained high quality of science produced by REUT Division staff with 22 peer reviewed articles published or *in press* during 2007 and 8 non-NOAA reimbursable projects funded through a competitive peer review process
- Guided the development of a major stock enhancement research program for lingcod in Puget Sound by fostering collaboration between NOAA and Indian tribes and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and leveraging the necessary funding
- Served on Board of Directors for Western Regional Aquaculture Consortium
- Co-organized Western Regional Conference on Comparative Endocrinology
- Served on Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee for University of Washington and obtained approval of Montlake and Manchester REUTD projects

*Human Resource Management:*

- Assisted transition into pay banding
- Advanced the development of promotion criteria for the Center.
- Lead role in merger of administrative functions between REUTD and ECD.
- Improved collaboration and communication between staff at the Montlake and Manchester laboratories through regular staff meetings and scientific leadership
- In the face of closing the Center's Kodiak Lab, he worked to transition the remaining Kodiak employee to a research program at the Manchester Marine Lab
- Encouraged and fostered cross-divisional collaborative projects. During FY07 REUTD established new collaborative projects with each of the other four divisions at the Center

# 2007 NOAA Fisheries Employee of the Year Nomination

## Narrative (continued)

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**Nomination Category:**

Supervisor

Although Walt made many significant contributions to the NWFSC and NOAA-Fisheries during 2007, which have often taken him away from his day-to-day role as a supervisor, he has maintained the qualities of a supervisor that so many of us have had the good fortune to experience. As employees, we often expect too much from our supervisors and managers. But in Walt's case, he expects more of himself than we expect from him. Among the many qualities that many of us have come to appreciate about Walt as a manager and science director are the following:

- He leads by example, rather than directs.
- His tireless efforts to improve the quality of science at the NWFSC inspire all of us.
- He advises and does not order.
- He trusts that we are capable of doing our jobs and that we will do our jobs to the best of our abilities.
- He manages by encouragement and positive feedback.
- He communicates openly and maintains an open door policy.
- He listens and hears.
- He has a high level of integrity and gives credit to his employees for their achievements.
- He encourages and appreciates creativity and risk taking.
- He helps employees see the big picture, which fosters collaboration and cooperation with other divisions, NOAA elements, constituents, and other agencies.
- He fosters a win/win approach to solving problems.

The REUT Division has been through many roller coaster rides of uncertain funding, and difficult personnel and research problems. He is always the one who maintains optimism and keeps the ship steady. For example, In FY 07 Walt guided the development of a major stock enhancement research program for lingcod on this important initiative, which had been controversial in recent years. Walt provided the vision for the direction of the program and emphasized its importance to staff, and offered clear suggestions as to how to bring the various entities together. He then provided us the opportunity to work out the technical, regulatory, and funding details with the various groups to get the project off the ground. He provided valuable input, guidance, and strategic planning throughout the project's development. This project now promises to be a cornerstone of the aquaculture program at the Manchester Research Station.