

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON CURRENT HABITAT ISSUES

Elections

Joel Kawahara (Commercial Fishing Representative) was re-elected as Chair. Jennifer Quan (Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife) was elected as Co-Chair.

Commendation of Zeke Grader

The Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations and the Institute for Fisheries Resources are sponsoring a special event in Sausalito in honor of Zeke Grader on the evening of Friday April 10, the day before the Council meeting. It will be held from 6-9 p.m., and tickets are now on sale. The Habitat Committee (HC) has long-appreciated the dedication and skills Zeke has brought to drafting or defending habitat-protective laws and policies. We also recognize his unrelenting efforts on behalf of commercial salmon fishermen, and urge the Council to send a note acknowledging his contributions.

California Drought Update

California remains in drought conditions. January 2015 was one of the driest Januaries in the historical record. Full-time active management of water and fisheries resources continues by state, Federal, and local agencies. The February manual snowpack survey recorded California snowpack at 19 percent of normal to date, and 12 percent of the April 1 average. The next statewide manual snow survey will be conducted at the beginning of March. An early February storm generated net gains for reservoirs in the north part of the state that totaled in excess of 1.0 million acre-feet; however, reservoirs in the southern portion of the state did not benefit significantly from this storm event.

Reservoir levels remain low. For example, as of February 16, Lake Shasta was at 53% of reservoir capacity, while other reservoirs ranged from 8 percent (Exchequer) to 58 percent of capacity (San Luis).

Additional information is available on the State of California Drought website: <http://ca.gov/drought/>.

Water Releases to Trinity Ordered

In late December 2014, the Department of the Interior (DOI) released a legal opinion calling for at least 50,000 acre-feet of Trinity Reservoir water to be released annually for the benefit of Humboldt County and downstream water users. The legal opinion was based upon interpretation of the 1955 law that authorized construction of the Trinity River Division of the CVP. The legal opinion reversed a long-held DOI position that the 50,000 acre-feet was not "additional" to the water required to protect Trinity River fish before being available for diversion to the Central Valley. That is, the legal opinion requires this 50,000 acre feet as an *additional* release.

Action Item:

- The HC urges the Council to send a note acknowledging Zeke Grader's contributions.

PFMC

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