



Pacific Fishery Management Council

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Dorothy M. Lowman, Chair | Donald O. McIsaac, Executive Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 18, 2016

TO: Salmon Advisory Subpanel, Salmon Technical Team, Model Evaluation Workgroup, and Interested Persons

FROM: Mike Burner, Staff Officer

SUBJECT: March Council Meeting

In conjunction with the March Council meeting, the Salmon Technical Team (STT) and the Salmon Advisory Subpanel (SAS) will meet on Wednesday March 9, 2015 beginning at 8 a.m. The meetings will be held in Terrace and Garden Rooms, respectively of the DoubleTree by Hilton Sacramento in Sacramento, California. The Council will begin the salmon agenda on Thursday (March 10), and continue through Sunday afternoon (March 13). Habitat issues will be covered Wednesday, March 9, and Pacific halibut issues will be covered on Sunday, March 13. The Council will receive a briefing on National Marine Fisheries Service regulatory and research activities on Thursday (Agenda Item E.1). Also note that you are invited to the Chair's Reception at 6 p.m. Monday evening.

The Council will be briefed Monday by the STT on the *Review of 2015 Ocean Salmon Fisheries and Preseason Report I: Stock Abundance Analysis for 2016 Ocean Salmon Fisheries* (Agenda Item E.2). The *Review of 2015 Ocean Salmon Fisheries* is available on the Council web site and hard copies will be available in the SAS and STT meeting rooms. *Preseason Report I* is being compiled by the STT the week of February 16 and should be posted to the Council web site by February 26. The STT and Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) will discuss salmon topics on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 8 and 9.

The main salmon issue before the Council will be developing alternatives for modeling 2016 ocean fisheries (Agenda Items E.2, E.4, E.5, E.6 and E.7). Thursday the SAS will present the Council with recommendations for three alternatives. SAS representatives should review the *Guidance for Alternative Development and Assessment* (Agenda Item E.4, Attachment 1) and clearly identify their fishery priorities and engage in negotiations as necessary to resolve conflicts among fishery sectors and areas to arrive at cohesive and coordinated options. The STT will then collate and analyze the alternatives. Working throughout the week the SAS, STT, and Council will refine the alternatives, which are scheduled to be adopted for public review on Sunday, March 13.

The Sacramento River Winter Chinook Workgroup (SRWCW) was formed by the Council in November and has been charged with developing alternative harvest policies for Sacramento River winter Chinook (SRWC). Their initial meeting will be on Tuesday, March 8 beginning at 1 p.m. in the American River Room. The SRWCW will be reviewing the status of the stock, discussing the state of the science, and developing a schedule of future work and meetings. This process is generally modeled after the successful processes utilized for Columbia River tule fall Chinook and Lower Columbia River natural coho. The Council will hear a report from the Workgroup on Sunday, March 9.

Pacific halibut is on the Council's agenda for Sunday. The Council will hear reports on the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) meeting (Agenda Item H.1) and will adopt options for halibut retention in the commercial salmon fisheries (Agenda Item H.2). The SAS should be prepared to offer recommendations regarding inseason adjustment of the halibut retention regulations for any April 2016 commercial salmon fisheries as well as alternatives for post-May 1, 2016 and April 2017 fisheries.

The Council will consider future Council meeting agendas and workload (Agenda Item I.3) on Monday. The SAS and STT may want to request topics for that agenda item.

Each year at the March meeting, the Council receives the Annual State of the California Current Report to bring ecosystem information into the Council process in a succinct, straightforward format to assist decision-making through the consideration of ecosystem variability (Agenda Item D.1). These other ecosystem matters will be before the Council in March and the review of Fishery Ecosystem Plan (FEP) indicators initiative (Agenda Item D.2).

Also, the Council will be hearing and update from NMFS on a consultation under the Endangered Species Act regarding salmon bycatch in the groundfish fisheries (Agenda Item G.6 on Sunday). There will be a joint session of the STT and SAS on this matter, tentatively scheduled for Sunday, March 13.

Please take some time and review your briefing materials thoroughly before the meeting. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. Thank you for your assistance in the Council's salmon management process.

MDB:rd

Enclosures:

1. Agenda Item A.4 – Council Agenda
2. Agenda Item C.1 – Habitat Issues
3. Agenda Item D.1 and D.2 – Ecosystem Matters
4. Agenda Items E.1 through E.9 – Salmon Management
5. Agenda Item G.6 – Groundfish Management
6. Agenda Items H.1 and H.2 – Pacific Halibut Management
7. Agenda Item I.3 – Council Administrative Matters
8. Proposed EC Agenda
9. Proposed HC Agenda
10. Proposed SAS Agenda
11. Proposed STT Agenda
12. Proposed SSC Agenda
13. Informational Reports
14. Hotel-related Information
15. Roster