

MITCHELL ACT HATCHERY DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)

Production from Mitchell Act (MA) hatchery programs has provided fish for tribal treaty fisheries in the Columbia River, and for ocean and in-river recreational and commercial fisheries. More recently, MA hatchery programs are conserving genetic resources for the purposes of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and reintroducing salmon into parts of their former range.

NOAA Fisheries has issued a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) that will inform Columbia River basin hatchery operations and funding of MA hatchery programs. The public comment deadline is November 4, 2010. Agenda Item C.3.a, Attachment 1 includes a fact sheet and the executive summary from the DEIS. Attachment 2 is the complete DEIS, and is available in electronic format on the briefing book CD and website.

NOAA Fisheries will hold three public meetings on the draft EIS:

- Sept. 20, 2010; 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Clark Regional Wastewater District, 8000 NE 52nd Crt., Vancouver, WA 98665
- Sept. 24, 2010; 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Kennewick Public Library, 1620 S. Union St., Kennewick, WA 99338
- Sept. 30, 2010; 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Columbia River Maritime Museum, 1792 Marine Dr., Astoria, OR 97103

NOAA will consider and address all substantive comments received by Nov. 4, 2010.

It will be difficult for the Council to provide well-considered comments by the September Council meeting; completing comments at the November meeting would be far preferable. However, because the comment deadline falls on the first day of the November Council meeting, it will be difficult to complete and transmit comments on that day unless they have been carefully drafted in advance to present a consensus position. State and Tribal agency representatives would need to consider preliminary discussions of MA issues affecting Council Area fisheries so that their common interests can be established and Council deliberations can be appropriately focused.

The Council may also consider a contingency if an extension to the comment deadline is granted. This could facilitate development of a statement between the September and November Council meetings. If an extension is granted, the Council should consider further procedures for submitting comments on the DEIS. Options include establishing a committee made up of Council members to draft a report, Salmon Technical Team review of any relevant analyses in the DEIS, and requesting State and Tribal representatives to prepare comments for the November briefing book.

Council Action:

1. Provide guidance for submitting comments on the Mitchell Act Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item C.3.a, Attachment 1: Draft Environmental Impact Statement to Inform Columbia River Basin Hatchery Operations and the Funding of Mitchell Act Hatchery Programs: Fact Sheet and Executive Summary.
2. Agenda Item C.3.a, Attachment 2: Draft Environmental Impact Statement to Inform Columbia River Basin Hatchery Operations and the Funding of Mitchell Act Hatchery Programs: *Available on Briefing Book CD and Website Only.*

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Develop Comments on the DEIS

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PFMC
08/23/10