

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 18
UPDATE OF ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) FOR SALMON

Pacific Coast salmon essential fish habitat (EFH) was established in 1999, as Appendix A to Amendment 14 to the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP). Periodic review of EFH components is required under the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Regulatory Guidance [50 CFR §600.815(a)(10)], and the most recent review indicated that new information warranted consideration of changes to the existing identification and description of Pacific Coast salmon EFH. At the September 2012 meeting, the Council adopted a suite of alternatives for consideration, and added an additional alternative at the April 2013 meeting. Council-managed Pacific salmon include Chinook, coho, and Puget Sound pink salmon. Sockeye, chum, steelhead, and non-Puget Sound pink salmon are not Council-managed species, and therefore EFH is not identified or described for those species.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for Amendment 18 to the Salmon FMP analyzes several alternatives that represent moderate or significant changes from the existing EFH provisions (Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 1, [electronic only](#)). The alternatives include:

- **Impassable barriers:** Removal of some dams and construction of fish passage facilities at others have resulted in salmon having the ability to access portions of watersheds previously inaccessible. The Council will consider modest increases in the geographic extent of EFH, reflecting newly-accessible habitat. In addition, the Council will consider alternatives for revising the criteria that are used to guide the decision as to whether any particular dam should be considered the upstream extent of EFH in a given watershed.
- **Distribution:** In some cases, data indicate that salmon are present in areas that are not currently designated as EFH, while in other cases it became evident that areas thought to be currently or historically occupied likely never had salmon presence. The EA presents scenarios for making adjustments to reflect this new understanding of salmon distribution.
- **Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC):** HAPCs are subsets of EFH that warrant special consideration during the EFH consultation process, although there is no additional regulatory process involved. The EFH provisions in the Salmon FMP currently have no HAPCs, citing a lack of sufficient information. The current EA describes and analyzes five potential HAPCs for Council consideration.
- **Non-fishing effects:** When a Federal action is taken that may adversely affect EFH, the Federal agency must consult with NMFS, which will develop conservation recommendations for the project. The current EFH provisions describe 21 such activities, and the EA describes and analyzes an additional 10 for possible inclusion in modified EFH provisions. Although NMFS is not limited to only those activities in consulting on Federal actions, they provide guidance and assistance in crafting conservation recommendations.
- **Future changes to EFH:** The Council will consider an alternative that describes a way to make some changes to EFH, without having to go through a full EFH amendment process.

This could provide a mechanism for modifying salmon EFH in response to new information, in a process more efficient than a full FMP amendment.

At this meeting, the Council will adopt final preferred alternatives for Amendment 18, reflecting changes to Pacific salmon EFH. The EFH provisions themselves will be contained in Appendix A to the Salmon FMP (Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 2, [electronic only](#)). After final action by the Council, the EA will be transmitted to NMFS. Minor changes to the EA and FMP language to reflect Council action can be made subsequent to the September meeting. However, major changes, such as modification of alternatives requiring additional analysis, would likely require another Council meeting for final action. Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 3 is a summary of the alternatives, excerpted from the EA being considered at this meeting.

Council Action:

1. **Select final preferred alternatives.**
2. **Confirm revised FMP language to reflect final preferred alternatives.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 1: Draft Environmental Assessment and Initial Regulatory Impact Review - Pacific Coast Salmon Plan Amendment 18: Incorporating Revisions to Pacific Salmon Essential Fish Habitat ([electronic only](#)).
2. Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 2: Draft Appendix A to the Pacific Coast Salmon Fishery Management Plan: Identification and Description of Essential Fish Habitat, Adverse Impacts, and Recommended Conservation Measures for Salmon ([electronic only](#)).
3. Agenda Item E.2.a, Attachment 3: Pacific Salmon Amendment 18, Incorporating Changes to Essential Fish Habitat: Overview of Alternatives.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Kerry Griffin
- b. Summary of Amendment 18 Alternatives Kerry Griffin and John Stadler
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Final Adoption of Salmon EFH Updates

PFMC
08/23/13