

SALMON AMENDMENT 18 – ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH) REVISIONS

At the September 2012 meeting, the Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) adopted for further analysis a suite of alternatives designed to update Pacific Coast salmon essential fish habitat (EFH). The alternatives describe possible modifications to Pacific salmon EFH, based on new and newly-available information compiled during the EFH periodic review that concluded in 2011.

Since that time, Council and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) staff have worked to further analyze and refine the suite of alternatives selected by the Council and to revise Appendix A to the FMP (identification and description of Pacific Coast salmon EFH). The Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) also provided an important component of Amendment 18. During the analysis of the alternatives and the initiation of an environmental assessment (EA), two issues have surfaced that warrant Council consideration.

First, the magnitude of the effort required to refine and analyze the alternatives in the EA, and to revise Appendix A to the FMP is much greater than anticipated, thereby creating a workload issue. This issue can be addressed by allowing more time to complete a thorough analysis of the alternatives and revisions to Appendix A.

The second issue relates to how collaborative efforts to reintroduce experimental populations of Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed salmon, under Section 10(j) of the ESA, might interact with the designation of EFH in areas where these reintroductions are being pursued. The issue is described in Agenda Item E.3.b, NMFS Report, and NMFS will suggest potential solutions to this issue at the April meeting.

The Council is asked provide direction to Council and NMFS staff regarding a revised amendment schedule and to consider potential solutions to the EFH and ESA issue.

Council Action:

- 1. Provide guidance on a new timeline for Amendment 18.**
- 2. Consider potential solutions to the 10(j) and EFH issue.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.3.b, NMFS Report: EFH and ESA Section 10(j) issues.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- c. Public Comment
- d. **Council Action:** Further Consideration of Salmon EFH in Amendment 18

Kerry Griffin