

REPORT OF THE HABITAT STEERING GROUP

The Habitat Steering Group met on Monday, June 23, 1997. The committee began by discussing its future with the coming of the essential fish habitat (EFH) amendments to the Council groundfish, salmon, and anchovy plans. We hope to be able to utilize the steering groups southern and northern panels to provide input into this process. The group also recognizes that the steering group must develop a process to prioritize and track habitat issues.

Mr. Andy Brunelle of the Interior Columbia Basin Project briefed the group on the project's Draft Environmental Impact Statements (DEIS). The DEIS is currently going through public comment process, which ends in October 1997. This management action will affect more than 72 million acres of U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management administered lands in the Interior Columbia Basin and portions of the Klamath and Great Basins.

The steering group plans on commenting on the Interior Columbia Basin DEIS. We will be collecting comments from the States of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington in formulating our comments that will be presented to the Council in September.

Mr. Steve Keller of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife updated the committee on Washington's Wild Salmonid Policy. A preferred alternative will be selected by the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission in mid-July, with a final salmonid policy being adopted in September 1997.

The Environmental Protection Agency (Region X - Seattle) gave a presentation on the Clean Water Act's Water Quality Standards program. Specifically, the 303 (d) program with its water quality limited stream list and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program. Information generated from this program will be critical in the identification of adverse effects to EFH.

PFMC
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