

COUNCIL OPERATING PROCEDURE

Habitat Steering Group Committee

Approved by Council: 04/06/95

Revised: 04/12/96, 03/05/97, 04/08/97, 09/18/98, 09/15/00, 11/01/02

6

PURPOSE

To establish procedures for the Habitat Committee (HC).

OBJECTIVES AND DUTIES

When requested by the Council chairperson or executive director, the HC shall:

1. Facilitate communication and coordinated action on important habitat issues which have regional significance to fisheries managed by the Council.
2. Work with key agency and public representatives to develop strategies to resolve present habitat problems and avoid future habitat conflicts.
3. Make recommendations to the Council for actions which help achieve the Council's habitat objectives as defined in its fishery management plans.
4. Make recommendations to the Council for actions which help achieve the Essential Fish Habitat mandates in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

COMPOSITION

The HC shall consist of 13 members as specified from each entity or category below. The representatives selected for the HC should have experience in habitat issues and/or expertise in strategic planning.

- One member from National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).
- One member from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).
- One member from Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission (PSMFC).
- Four members from among the four state fishery agencies (Washington, Idaho, Oregon, and California).
- Two tribal representatives (one Klamath, one Northwest or Columbia River).
- Two members representing the fishing industry - one commercial and one recreational.
- One member representing a conservation group.
- One member at-large.

MEMBERSHIP

Terms

The HC members representing NMFS, USFWS, PSMFC, and the state and tribal entities will be appointed for indefinite terms and replaced only as needed or at the pleasure of the Council chairperson (On 11/1/02, the Council specifically approved a term ending date for the Klamath Tribal position of 12/31/03. No directive was provided with regard to the Northwest or Columbia River position). The other HC members (industry, conservation, and public at-large) will be appointed for three-year terms. The Council chairperson may select members which best serve

the needs of the HC and Council rather than adhering to a strict rotation among the entities represented by each position.

Termination of Membership

A committee member may be replaced at the Council's discretion if he/she: (1) transfers employment or moves to a different location, (2) is absent from two meetings in any 12 month period, or (3) appears unable to fulfill his/her obligations as a committee member.

Replacement of Members

Upon receipt of a letter of resignation, expiration of three-year terms, or after Council action to remove a member, the executive director shall, depending on the members position, do one of the following: (1) contact the agency which the former member represented for a nominee or (2) advertise for replacement of the industry, conservation, or public at-large members. Announcements for nominations for shall be distributed widely and be specific about the duties and responsibilities.

Alternates

If the executive director is notified in advance, in writing, an HC member may send an alternate to an HC meeting when unable to attend such meeting or when it would better serve the HC. Nonfederal alternates will be reimbursed for travel expenses.

Officers

A chairperson (or co-chairs) will be recommended by the HC to be appointed by the Council chairperson from among the HC members for a one year term. Officers will rotate to ensure sharing of the workload and diverse representation.

MEETINGS

With the approval of the executive director, the HC will meet in conjunction with each Council meeting or as determined by the HC chairperson to achieve Council habitat objectives. As budget permits, the Council will reimburse travel costs for nonfederal steering group members.

Public Notification of Meetings

Notice of HC meetings shall be published in the *Federal Register* and made available to news media.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Council staff members will assist the committee as requested and as work priorities allow.

REPORTS TO COUNCIL

The HC chairperson or designee will report to the Council on all HC actions.

ISSUE SCREENING AND REVIEW PROCEDURES

The following criteria will guide HC and Council procedures.

- All issues must have a significant impact on Council managed fisheries. This may include habitat policy issues of regional or national scope as well as effects of specific projects or resource developments.
- Direct presentation of issues to the HC should be at the request of the Council or the HC chairperson and coordinated with the appropriate individual fishery management entities.
- Private individuals or organizations may submit requests for Council action directly to the HC.
- Direction and assignments to the HC shall originate from the Council.
- Council action will require approval of a majority of Council members when a quorum is present (except as noted under the "Quick Response Procedures" in Council Operating Procedure 1).
- All issues submitted to the HC should include the HC Proposed Action Form and have sufficient supporting information to allow clear identification of the issue and to permit an evaluation of the need for Council support.

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