

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT

The Habitat Committee (HC) met on Monday, April 5, 2004 to discuss issues including the following topics. The HC also has supplied separate statements on the essential fish habitat (EFH) environmental impact statement (EIS) (Agenda Item C.6) and the programmatic bycatch EIS (Agenda Item C.13).

Klamath Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Letter

The Habitat Committee edited the draft letter contained in the Council's briefing packet (Exhibit E.1.a, Attachment 2) regarding the Klamath River Hydroelectric Project final license application. Comments regarding the final license application are due to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission by April 26, 2004. This letter is consistent with previous positions the Council has taken regarding FERC relicensing procedures, as well as the importance of Klamath Basin fisheries resources to the Council. We recommend the Council send the edited letter to FERC prior to the April 26, 2004 deadline.

Letter on EFH Rulemaking

NMFS extended the comment period for revisions to the EFH rule. The comment period ends prior to the June Council meeting. The Council has an opportunity to provide input if you take action at this meeting. A draft letter was provided in the supplemental briefing book materials (Exhibit E.1.a, Supplemental Attachment 3). The HC discussed this letter and provides edits in Exhibit E.1.a, Supplemental Final Attachment 3. The HC recommends the Council approve this letter and submit it prior to the deadline. In general, the letter supports strengthening the designation of EFH and its applicability to fisheries management.

Klamath Water Users' Association Presentation

The HC heard a presentation from Mr. Dan Keppen of the Klamath Water Users Association. He introduced his presentation by stating a desire to work toward collaborative solutions to Klamath water issues. However, his presentation primarily focused on restating the Klamath Water Users' opinions and positions on the 2002 adult fish kill, and he was very critical of the California Department of Fish and Game's preliminary fish kill report. Much of his presentation dealt with interim reports and media reports. The HC concurs with the desire to work toward collaborative solutions, but clearly the agricultural community in the upper Klamath, and the people dependent on the fishery resource, still have work to do even to communicate with one another.