

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT

Liquefied Natural Gas Proposal for the Columbia River

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) received a draft letter to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on the Northern Star Bradwood proposal, one of several liquefied natural gas (LNG) proposals pending in Oregon (Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 1). These proposals may adversely affect salmon essential fish habitat (EFH) and the EFH of other managed species.

The Habitat Committee (HC) reviewed the letter, but we learned that additional “Draft Resource Reports” from the project proponents have recently come available. These reports contain more information about potential habitat impacts. In addition, the HC received a letter from Northern Star Natural Gas requesting a meeting with the HC in June (Agenda Item G.1.c, Supplemental Public Comment 2). The HC Chair, Mr. Stuart Ellis, has contacted Northern Star to see if they are available to brief the HC in April. Therefore, the HC recommends postponing this letter at this time. We will review the new documents and provide a more detailed letter for Council consideration at the April or June Council meeting.

Klamath River Parasite Infestations

Mr. Jim Welter of the Salmon Advisory Subpanel reported on parasite infestations in the Klamath River. He provided copies of recent scientific research and reported on a workshop that further indicated a potential relationship between the high incidence of parasite infestations and low water flows.

Given the long history of the Council writing letters urging balanced and proper water management, several members wished we could write an “I told you so” letter. But realistically, as the Council provides information to the public on this disastrous fishing season, we recommend that links to inadequate water flows and other habitat factors be made.

Klamath River FERC Relicensing Process

The relicensing of the Klamath River hydroelectric project has reached a critical juncture where prescriptions from the federal agencies regarding fish passage and instream flows are due at the end of the month. The HC has drafted a resolution on this matter (Agenda Item G.1, Attachment 2). The resolution encourages dam decommissioning to allow successful fish passage and improved water quality conditions or appropriate restoration measures as proposed by agencies and tribes. This resolution is used as the basis of the attached draft letter (Agenda Item G.1.a, Supplemental Attachment 3). There is a placeholder in the letter to anticipate specific comments on the prescriptions issued by federal and state agencies in late March.

PFMC
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