

FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 15 (*DE MINIMIS* FISHERIES)

At its March 2006 meeting, the Council directed development of Amendment 15 to the Salmon Fishery Management Plan (FMP). The primary focus of Amendment 15 will be defining allowable *de minimis* impacts to stocks that do not already qualify for exceptions to the Overfishing Criteria listed in the FMP, which requires conservation objectives to be met during the preseason process for all FMP stocks.

At the March Council meeting, the Council identified two issues to be considered in Amendment 15, identified three preliminary alternatives in addition to status quo, and adopted an intended schedule leading to final action. The two issues identified were (1) modifying the current FMP as to criteria and Council action for a Conservation Alert and (2) modifying the current Klamath River fall Chinook natural escapement objective to define an allowable *de minimis* fishery take at low abundance levels. The three possible preliminary alternatives to be analyzed were (1) use of a sliding scale for a spawner reduction rate as suggested by the Klamath Fishery Management Council, (2) prescribing an exploitation rate level (e.g., $\leq 5\%$ or $\leq 10\%$) below which fisheries could be prosecuted depending on yearly circumstances, and (3) use of an exploitation rate matrix that takes into account such things as the abundance of the stock in question, the abundance of co-mingled healthy stocks, and technical uncertainty. The Council may consider other issues and alternatives, which could be developed through the Ad Hoc Salmon Amendment Committee (SAC), other advisory bodies, and public comment.

The schedule and process adopted by the Council was intended to reduce the probability of requiring an emergency rule for 2007 fisheries, should circumstances require. This schedule included (1) a review at the June Council meeting in Foster City of preliminary alternatives and adoption of a range of reasonable alternatives for analysis over the summer, (2) a review at the September Council meeting in Foster City of the analysis of alternatives and adoption of a preferred alternative for public review, and (3) final action on an FMP amendment tentatively planned for the November Council meeting in San Diego.

Council Chairman Hansen appointed 21 members to the SAC to develop and review the proposed amendment. The committee structure includes two subcommittees with specific duties, with the balance of the committee providing a review and advisory role. The Document Subcommittee is responsible for preparing the draft Environmental Assessment and Council or public review documents, including modeling or analytical components and written narratives. The Regulatory Streamlining Subcommittee is charged with facilitating Federal responsibilities, including the Council:NMFS interface and Federal internal necessities, to allow for timely Secretarial review and decision on final Council action, which is scheduled for the November 2006 meeting in San Diego. A draft schedule for the Amendment 15 process is provided within Agenda Item G.2.a, Attachment 1.

The Document Subcommittee met May 11 in Portland to discuss analytical strategies and possible alternatives in preparation for the full SAC meeting at the June Council meeting. The full SAC is expected to develop a range of alternatives for Council consideration, and the Council should adopt a range of reasonable alternatives for public review at the June meeting.

Council Action:

1. Provide direction to SAC on preliminary alternatives and proposed analytical framework.

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item G.2.a, Attachment 1: Preliminary Draft Pacific Coast Salmon Plan Amendment 15: An Initiative to Provide for *De Minimis* Fishing Opportunity (First Draft for Salmon Amendment Committee and Council Review).

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview Chuck Tracy
- b. Salmon Amendment Committee Report
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Provide Direction on Selection and Analysis of Preliminary Draft Alternatives

PFMC
05/24/06