

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON CURRENT HABITAT ISSUES

The Habitat Committee (HC) discussed the Central Valley Salmon Recovery Plan and the Workgroup Status Report on Causes of 2008 Salmon Production Failure, and prepared comments that were forwarded to Council staff. The HC received an update on the Reedsport, Oregon wave energy project. (The Council should note Informational Report 3, which provides a general update on West Coast hydrokinetic projects.)

The HC believes the Reedsport Ocean Power Technologies (OPT) project sets a precedent for the west coast, as it is one of two projects farthest along in the licensing process (the other is the Makah Bay project in Washington). OPT is close to submitting their preliminary draft environmental assessment (DEA) to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) by the end of September. However, the settlement group, which consists of agencies, NGOs and stakeholders, is not satisfied with the DEA. Several significant concerns remain unresolved. For example, OPT still intends to apply for a 50 year license, while the settlement group would prefer 20 - 30 years. OPT intends to lobby Oregon's governor on this. The settlement group also has concerns about the tone of the DEA, as it implies "no significant impacts" to biological resources, includes unsupported conclusions on impacts, has vague study objectives and methods, proposes only five years of environmental studies for a 50-year license, inadequately considers electromagnetic impacts and impacts on Dungeness crab, and did not address impacts on Green sturgeon (a species of high state concern). Also, OPT's adaptive management plan is not yet complete. The settlement group submitted comments on the DEA to OPT for their consideration. OPT hopes to have a signed settlement agreement by mid October.

Upcoming relevant meetings:

- Forum on Offshore Aquaculture in the Pacific Northwest; Sept. 9 and 10 at Hatfield Marine Science Center, Newport OR:
www.oregonstate.edu/conferences/aquaculture2008/
- Alternative Energy Development in the West Coast Environment: Sept. 23, Hilton Portland, OR: sponsored by MMS, FERC and the three west coast states. Technology, policy and environmental issues will be addressed.
www.westcoastoceans.gov/
- Ocean Renewable Energy Conference in Coos Bay; Sept. 25 and 26: Presentation on all aspects of development from early community engagement to final deployment and energy generation. <http://76.12.167.63/preregistrationpages/index.php>