

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON
FUTURE COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA AND WORKLOAD PLANNING

Ecosystem-based Management

While ecosystem-based fishery management (EBFM) does not appear on the Council agenda until November 2009, the Habitat Committee (HC) suggests that the Council consider the structure, mission, and appointment of a committee that would be poised to initiate EBFM planning as soon as funds become available. In the interim, the HC would welcome a briefing from scientists at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Northwest Fisheries Science Center (NWFSC) on the use of the Atlantis model for EBFM.

Salmon EFH Review

The NMFS Northwest and Southwest regions and the Council have developed a proposal seeking NOAA funds to generate information to be used in updating salmon essential fish habitat (EFH). Pacific salmon EFH has not been updated since 1999. If funding is obtained, a draft report would be delivered in summer 2010. The HC suggests initiation of salmon EFH review be scheduled to coincide with the availability of this product.

Marine Protected Area Nominations

The HC received a report on the review of sites nominated for inclusion in the National Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network. Fisheries MPAs were not included in this first round of network nominations, though they are included in the National MPA Inventory. Examples of Pacific Council fishery MPAs are cowcod closure areas, salmon bycatch management zones for whiting, and groundfish habitat conservation areas. The HC recommends that Council sites be added to the national network in order to appropriately recognize Council efforts at protecting habitat and fish. It is the HC's understanding that the MPA Center would like to begin a dialogue with the Council about a future nomination process for Council MPAs; the next round of nominations will occur in late 2009. The HC recommends the Council reserve time at the September or November meeting for a discussion and decision on nomination of Council fishery MPAs into the national network.