

CURRENT HABITAT ISSUES

The Habitat Committee (HC) will meet on Friday and Saturday, March 4-5, 2011. At this meeting, the HC will hear a presentation from the Bureau of Reclamation on Central Valley water issues. The HC also discussed the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary Management Plan Review, Sacramento River fall Chinook issues, coastal pelagic species essential fish habitat, ecosystem-based management, and other issues. Additionally, Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 1 is a reply from Mr. Eric Schwaab to the Council's recommendation letter for NMFS' Habitat Assessment Improvement Plan.

Council Action:

- 1. Consider comments and recommendations developed by the HC at its March 2011 meeting.**

Reference Materials:

1. Agenda Item E.1.a, Attachment 1: Reply from Mr. Eric Schwaab to the Council's letter of recommendation on NMFS' Habitat Assessment Improvement Plan.
2. Agenda Item E.1.b, Supplemental HC Report.

Agenda Order:

- a. Agenda Item Overview
- b. Report of the Habitat Committee
- c. Reports and Comments of Advisory Bodies and Management Entities
- d. Public Comment
- e. **Council Action:** Consider Habitat Committee Recommendations

Jennifer Gilden
Joel Kawahara

PFMC
2/10/11

RECEIVED

DEC 07 2010

PFMC



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

THE DIRECTOR

Agenda Item E.1

Attachment 1

March 2011

Donald O. McIsaac, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97220

DEC 07 2010

Dear Dr. McIsaac: ^{Don}

Thank you for your letter endorsing NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) *Habitat Assessment Improvement Plan* (HAIP). The HAIP is an important initiative for improving NMFS' assessment of habitat and sustainable management of fish stocks. NMFS will be looking for opportunities to fund its implementation through the budget planning process. We are also exploring ways to better use existing habitat science with existing resources. In FY 2011 we will work on prioritizing stocks, geographic areas, and data inadequacies that should be addressed through habitat assessments, and on improving communication and coordination between habitat scientists and habitat managers. We are also planning to fund some pilot projects intended to improve stock assessments through use of habitat information.

The work you are doing on the essential fish habitat (EFH) 5-year review and the Ecosystem Fishery Management Plan underscores the important role of habitat information in fishery management decision-making and the challenges of using habitat science effectively. We look forward to working with the Pacific Council and other Councils in advancing the role of habitat science in decision-making for fisheries management.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the HAIP in detail, please contact Ms. Mary Yoklavich, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, at (858) 546-7067; Dr. Steve Brown, headquarters Office of Science and Technology, (301) 713-2367; or Ms. Susan-Marie Stedman, headquarters Office of Habitat Conservation, at (301) 713-2325.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric C. Schwaab", written over a circular stamp or mark.

Eric C. Schwaab



HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON CURRENT HABITAT ISSUES

National Standards for Levees

The Habitat Committee (HC) recently became aware of an effort by the Corps of Engineers to modify their national standards for vegetation management on levees. These modifications have the potential to denude large stream reaches of riparian habitat, impacting salmon essential fish habitat (EFH) from the Central Valley of California to the Canadian border. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has developed a Biological Opinion stating the impacts to salmon in the Puget Sound from vegetation management mandated by the Corps of Engineers. The Corps' nationwide permits are also undergoing review, and there may be specific concerns in these permits regarding EFH.

The HC recommends investigating these situations and preparing a letter to the Corps of Engineers, by June, detailing EFH impacts.

PFMC
3/5/11