

HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON HABITAT MATTERS

The Habitat Committee (HC) met yesterday and discussed the following matters.

California Central Valley & North Coast update. The California State Water Resources Control Board's Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan update process is nearing a major milestone, with the final Board vote on instream flow requirements for the San Joaquin River expected on November 7. This process will mandate baseline flow objectives with an adaptive management process, roughly doubling the amount of water in the San Joaquin River and increasing water in Sacramento River.

There are ongoing discussions concerning potential dam removal on the Eel River in order to restore habitat to historic spawning and rearing habitat in Mendocino National Forest. The Klamath River Renewal Corporation has filed its "definite plan" for removal of four dams on the Klamath River with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC); the dams are slated for removal in 2021. In addition, several critical public/tribal trust fisheries issues have been the subject of litigation this year. Klamath River dam removal considerations and instream/flushing flow and diversion management pertain directly to the Klamath River fall run Chinook salmon rebuilding plan.

There have been sustained Congressional efforts to curtail or eliminate National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) fish passage authority in FERC relicensing efforts (§18 of the Federal Power Act). The Secretary of Commerce is currently promulgating agency directives to include maximizing agriculture diversions within NOAA's mandate to protect salmonids listed under the Endangered Species Act in the Central Valley. The Bureau of Reclamation has canceled winter-run Chinook reintroduction on the McCloud River above Lake Shasta. Many of these issues pertain directly to the Sacramento River fall run Chinook salmon rebuilding plan.

California Offshore wind. The second California Ocean Renewable Energy Task Force meeting is September 17 in Sacramento. At the meeting, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) will be announcing "call areas" for potential offshore floating wind projects that will go out for public comment shortly after the meeting. These areas may become potential lease areas, which will likely be modified before a public lease sale. Additional opportunities for public comment will occur as offshore renewable energy moves forward. Floating offshore wind turbines have the potential to affect fishing and habitat. The BOEM process for potential lease areas is now occurring in both Central and Northern California.

Columbia River Treaty. Negotiations for revisions to the U.S./Canada Columbia River Treaty are starting to heat up. Implications for future flow and spill management in the Columbia River. See [Conservation Groups: Make River Health Part of Columbia River Treaty Focus.](#)

Beaver Habitat. The state of Idaho is conducting a beaver habitat assessment in order to identify opportunities for beaver restoration for habitat, fish and wildlife benefits. Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission has videos available to help explain the benefits of beavers and their dams to fish and water quantity: <http://habitat.psmfc.org/living-with-beaver/>.

Orcas. Southern Resident killer whale critical habitat may be expanded to state and Federal waters as far south as Point Reyes, California. Southern Resident killer whale critical habitat concerns will likely be germane to salmon rebuilding plans and other salmon essential fish habitat considerations.

Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia. The Oregon Coordination Council on Ocean Acidification and Hypoxia will submit their first report with prioritized recommendations to the Oregon legislature on September 15th. The report will be posted at <http://Oregonocean.info/index.php/ocean-acidification>.

Deep Sea Corals

At the November Council meeting, the HC will receive a presentation from a representative of the Deep Sea Coral Research and Technology Program on a four-year deep-sea coral research initiative focused on the West Coast. The presentation will include how priorities put forth by the HC are being integrated into a science plan for the region.

PFMC
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