

TRIBAL/WDFW STATEMENT ON ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT SCOPING AND IPC HABITAT WORK

The Olympic Coast Intergovernmental Policy Council (IPC) is made up of the State of Washington as well as the four Coastal Treaty Tribes—Makah, Quileute, and Hoh Tribes, and the Quinault Indian Nation—to provide management advice to the Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary. The IPC works to identify common goals and prioritize research to inform management. As mentioned before during PFMC deliberations on groundfish essential fish habitat (EFH), we are undertaking a comprehensive inventory and GIS description of the marine habitats off Olympic Coast ([Agenda Item D.2.c, Supplemental WDFW and OCNMS Report](#), and Supplemental Tribal Reports from [Quinault](#), [Quileute](#), and [Makah](#) from March 2014). This initiative is called the Habitat Framework.

The IPC has convened a working group consisting of their scientific and technical staff as well as invited federal and academic experts to guide development of this Habitat Framework. The expert working group convened via webinar last October to recommend the Coastal and Marine Ecological Classification Standard (CMECS) as the appropriate system for describing these habitats. They have also provided some guidance on describing CMECS components (i.e., substrate and possibly geofom) building upon data products developed for the Washington State marine spatial planning (MSP) efforts. Further work is underway to compile existing data and convert those data into CMECS codes and GIS layers.

As stated in the previous reports referenced above, the tribal and state co-managers and OCNMS have committed to this process to comprehensively describe habitats off Washington. This information will inform shared management priorities, including protecting groundfish EFH, and address some of the concerns raised by the Coastal Tribes during this EFH review process. As such, we recommend that the waters off the coast of Washington that overlap with the usual and accustomed areas (U&As) of the Coastal Treaty Tribes not be included in the geographic range of changes to EFH designations or ecological closed areas (i.e., whether to minimize the adverse effects of fishing or for protection of corals or sponges) being considered under this EFH scoping. The Coastal Treaty Tribes also note that changes to EFH designations or management taken outside of their U&As may still affect treaty rights or fisheries and reserve the right to be consulted on those proposed actions.

Further, we understand that the Council may be considering management measures that are outside the scope of EFH designations or ecological closed areas (e.g., RCA changes, gear requirements, etc.). The Coastal Treaty Tribes reserve the right to be consulted on any such changes that may affect their fisheries or otherwise impact their treaty-reserved rights.