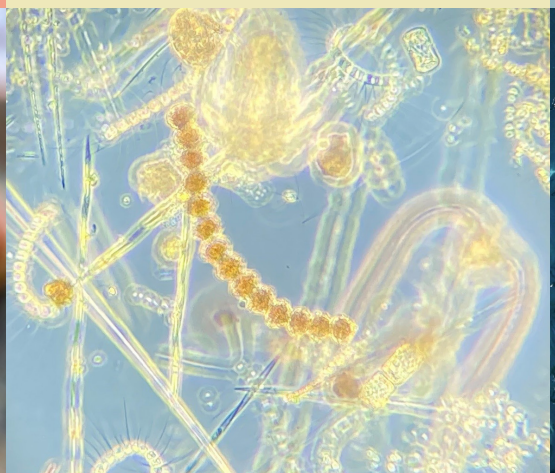
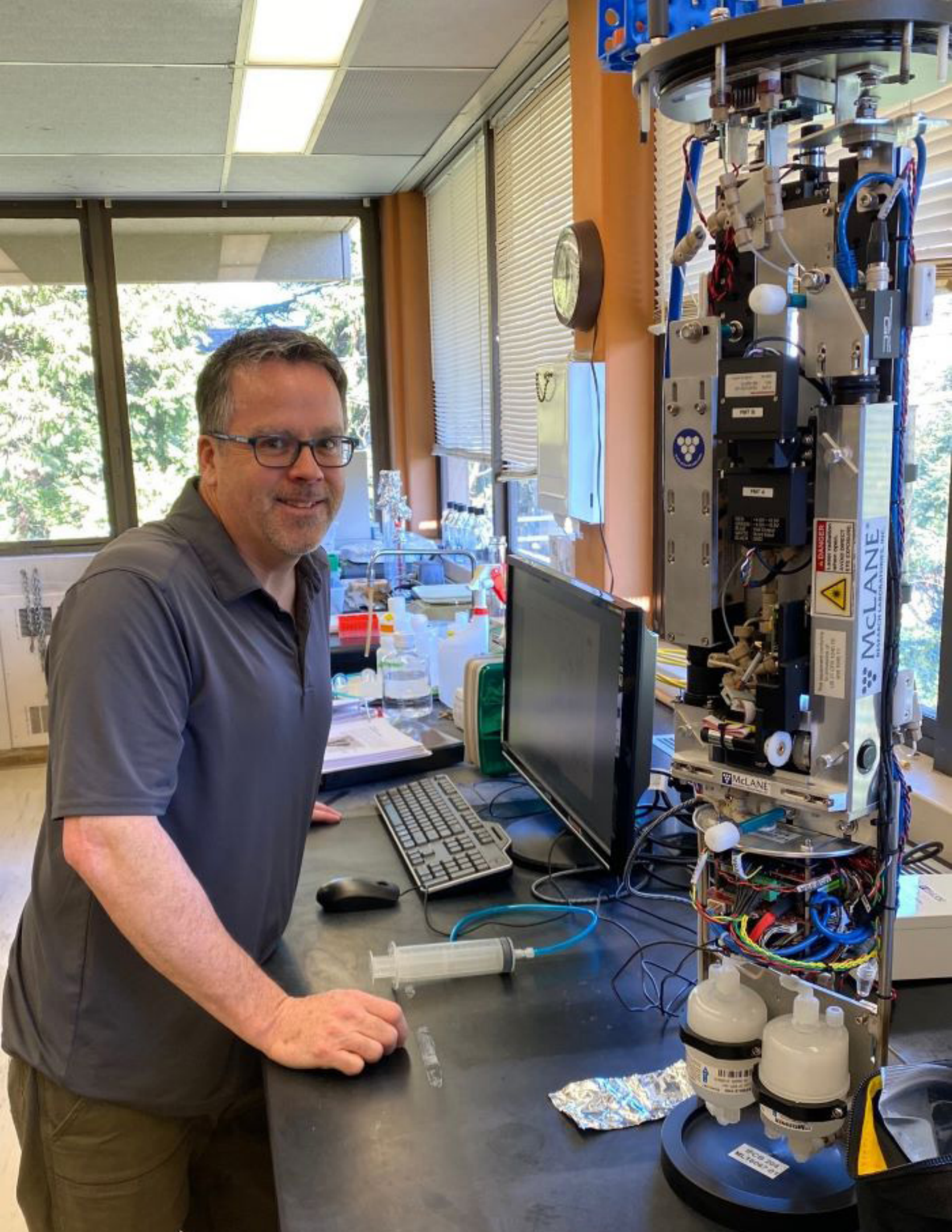
National Marine Fisheries Service
Northwest Fisheries Science Center

Annual Guidance Memorandum

Fiscal Year 2025

NOAA FISHERIES




McLANE

OUR VISION

The Northwest Fisheries Science Center conducts leading-edge research and analyses that provide the foundation for management decisions to protect, recover, restore, and sustain ecosystems and living marine resources in the Pacific Northwest.

OUR MISSION

To conduct the science necessary to conserve marine and anadromous species and their habitats off the Washington, Oregon, and northern California coasts and in freshwater rivers of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

OUR VALUES

Stewardship

We make a positive difference in the world by being responsible stewards of the natural environment and the public's resources entrusted to us.

Service

We are dedicated to serving the public by providing accurate, innovative, high-quality, timely, and responsive science.

Integrity

We work and act in the most conscientious, ethical, honest, professional, and transparent manner possible.

Collaboration

We bring a cooperative spirit to our science, research, and work. We engage with our fellow employees, partners, and stakeholders with a sense of teamwork, sharing, and open flow of information.

Community

We value and treat each other with respect for our whole, authentic selves. We commit to a fair, equitable, and inclusive community that recognizes the contributions of all and is supportive of diverse perspectives and people.

Photo Credits

Cover: (center) NWFSC scientists Owen Liu and Blake Feist on the RV *Minnow* off Cape Johnson, Washington. Credit: Megan Shaffer, NMFS/NWFSC. (bottom, left to right) 1) A smooth octopus caught during the 2024 Hake Survey aboard the NOAA Ship *Bell M. Shimada*. Credit: Maddie Reifsteck, volunteer. 2) Contents of a phytoplankton net tow taken five nautical miles off the Oregon coast. Credit: Anna Bolm, Oregon State University. 3) A conductivity–temperature–depth (CTD) rosette just under the surface during offshore deployment. Credit: John Pohl, NMFS/NWFSC.
Inside front cover: NWFSC scientist Brian Bill with the new Imaging Flow Cytobot in support of the salmon IRA project on lower trophic-level indicators. Credit: Stephanie Moore, NMFS/NWFSC.
Page 3: Cloud ramparts offshore of Newport, Oregon. Credit: John Pohl, NMFS/NWFSC.
Page 4: (top left) Glaucous-winged gull (*Larus glausescens*). Credit: Anna Kagley, NMFS/NWFSC. (bottom) Representatives from NWFSC, SWFSC, the National Park Service, USGS, USFWS, the Karuk, Yurok, and Elwha Tribes, WDFW, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation at the mouth of the Elwha River, Washington, for a workshop that began an ongoing collaboration between groups in the Elwha and Klamath River basins to work together on dam removal. Credit: Jeff Duda, USGS.
Page 5: Destruction Island lighthouse, Washington. Credit: John Pohl, NMFS/NWFSC.
Page 6: The FV *Last Straw* during a port call for the Groundfish Survey, Monterey, California, June 2024. Credit: John Harms, NMFS/NWFSC.
Page 7: FRAM Safety Trainers Laurel Lam, Steve de Blois, Jeannine Memoly, and Cassandra Donovan lead survey staff and volunteers through sea safety training at the Sand Point boat basin, Western Regional Center. Credit: Jeannine Memoly, NMFS/NWFSC.
Page 8: (left) Aquaculture and Marine Fish and Shellfish Biology Program Manager Ken Cain holding an adult sablefish at Manchester Research Station. Credit: Penny Swanson. (right) Former NWFSC contractor Karl Veggerby at a Taylor Shellfish oyster farm in Samish Bay, Washington. Credit: Peter Kiffney, NMFS/NWFSC.
Page 9: (left) Killer whale with digital acoustic recording tag (DTAG) attached. Credit: NOAA Fisheries. (right) Illustration of green sturgeon spawning. Credit: Blane Bellerud, NMFS/WCR.
Page 10: Electrofishing for Chinook salmon and steelhead trout in Marsh Creek in the Salmon River basin, Idaho, as part of the long-term Wild Fish Tagging Project. This project has been monitoring wild juvenile salmon and steelhead survival for 30 years. Left to right: Kara Jaenecke (NWFSC contractor), Neal Espinosa (Nez Perce Tribe), Alyson Atondo (NWFSC contractor), and Amber Barenberg (NWFSC). Credit: Beth Sanderson, NMFS/NWFSC.
Page 11: A rare fogbow off the bow of the NOAA Ship *Bell M. Shimada*. Credit: John Pohl, NMFS/NWFSC.
Page 12: Members of NWFSC's Fisheries Engineering and Acoustic Technologies Program and volunteers (Amanda Vitale, Bryant Srioudom, Melina Shak, Maddie Reifsteck, Ana Olsen, and Julia Clemons) during the 2024 Hake Survey. Credit: Julia Clemons, NMFS/NWFSC.
Page 13: (top to bottom) 1) NWFSC scientists Stuart Munsch, Jesse Lamb, Ben Sandford, Aimee Fullerton, and Tim Beechie at the Pasco Research Station, 2024. Credit: Claire Fullerton-Burke, volunteer. 2) NWFSC contractors Alyson Atondo, Dorothy Wessels, and Melanie Puddy tagging juvenile Chinook salmon and steelhead trout at the Juvenile Fish Facility at Lower Granite Dam on the Snake River, Washington. Credit: Amber Barenberg, NMFS/NWFSC. 3) Biologists from NWFSC and the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe seining for Chinook salmon near Hood Canal Bridge, Puget Sound, Washington. Credit: Megan Moore, NMFS/NWFSC. 4) Liesl Danyluk (University of Washington Applied Physics Laboratory), Camille Wheeler (NCCOS), Tina Mikulski (NCCOS), and Alexis Fischer (University Corporation for Atmospheric Research) preparing NWFSC's fleet of in situ robotic samplers for deployment. Credit: Stephanie Moore, NMFS/NWFSC.
Page 14: NWFSC scientist Jesse Lamb dissecting salmon with 4th graders at Edwin Markham Elementary School, Pasco, Washington, as part of their Salmon in the Classroom program. Credit: Lindsay Lamb, Edwin Markham Elementary School.
Page 15: Aquacultured sablefish produced at Manchester Research Station. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.
Back cover: Killer whale in Puget Sound. Credit: NOAA Fisheries.

Introduction

This year holds significant importance for NOAA and the Northwest Fisheries Science Center (Center). In June 2023, NOAA revealed its plans for the unprecedented investment of funding under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and the Center has been working diligently to stand up new IRA projects, partnerships, and staffing to complement its existing portfolio.

The primary focus of the IRA is to strengthen the agency's core mission of conserving and managing the nation's marine resources by better addressing climate change. This includes incorporating Equity and Environmental Justice (EEJ) initiatives to prepare America's vulnerable communities, tribes, and economy for the impacts of climate change. We feel the effects of climate change in every aspect of the agency's mission, be it managing fisheries and aquaculture or conserving protected resources and habitats. The historic infusion of these funds allows the Center to prioritize research and invest in several other critical areas, including: facilities and equipment; data acquisition, technology, and management; conservation efforts around Pacific salmon; and the Climate, Ecosystems, and Fisheries Initiative (CEFI). It is also allowing us to hire new staff into all divisions, bringing new ideas, interests, and perspectives to our community. While IRA appropriations will expire at the end of FY26, our FY23–25 investments will have transformative impacts for years to come.

This year's Annual Guidance Memorandum (AGM) will focus primarily on our priorities in light of IRA opportunities, recognizing the planning and early execution work that has already occurred and the implementation of new science continuing into FY25. The Center will also continue to do its core work of conducting research and analyses to inform management decisions to protect, recover, restore, and sustain ecosystems and living marine resources in the Pacific Northwest, and to support development of sustainable domestic marine aquaculture. As we produce science that helps us mitigate risk and plan for the future, we must also take risks to help

us better understand and adapt to changes in our environment. We rely on our tenacious, creative, and resilient Center staff to face these opportunities, risks, and challenges head on and together.

This is a critical time for us and the work we do. We face unprecedented times—both in funding support, and in ever-changing climate conditions—requiring us to take calculated risks, sometimes failing and learning as we go. In our ability to learn and adapt, we will find innovative solutions and advance the critical work we do. It is also essential that we consider input from surveys, listening sessions, and temperature checks, and align our resources and priorities to ensure we are not overextending our dedicated staff. We will also continue to advance and foster our diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) efforts. With new colleagues joining our workforce, we have opportunities to foster a sense of belonging and ensure our entire workforce thrives in a supportive and inclusive Center culture. Holding a Science Symposium in 2025 is one way we will put these commitments into practice.

And of course, for the Center in particular, 2025 has special significance as the target year in our Center's Vivid Description of the Future (VDOF). We continue to organize around that vision, which highlights our priorities following the longstanding strategic goals of NOAA Fisheries, which include:

1. Sustainable Fisheries.
2. Protected Resources.
3. Organizational Excellence.

The focused priorities described below are only a handful of the countless actions and critical work we do every day at the Center, and in partnership across the U.S. West Coast to support the stewardship of our marine environment as outlined in the new NMFS West Coast Geographic Strategic Plan for 2024–27.

NWFSC staff may also refer to the FY25 AGM Companion Document for more detailed budget, policy, and organizational information.

Kevin Werner
Science and Research Director
Northwest Fisheries Science Center

Cross-Cutting Themes

Four cross-cutting themes appear across our strategic goals and actions. These themes are indicated in this document with acronyms:

CC – Climate Change

Priorities addressing the impact of climate change on our fisheries and protected resources.

TT – Tribal Trust

Priorities supporting our commitment to uphold our tribal trust responsibilities.

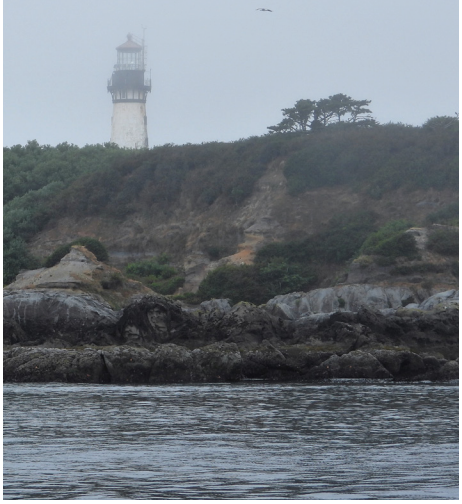
EEJ – Equity & Environmental Justice

Priorities that advance equity and accessibility of services and benefits to underserved communities.

AT – Advanced Technologies

Advanced technologies, modern data systems, and infrastructure that expand and modernize stock assessments to account for climate change.

Each activity is linked to NMFS's annual priorities for 2025.



GOAL 1

Adaptively manage fisheries for sustainability and economic competitiveness.

(Supports VDOF Goal 1.1)

The Center provides the best available science in support of NOAA's sustainable fisheries management goal. We continue to conduct surveys, stock assessments, economic analyses, and observation science annually. This year, we will also invest in activities to keep up with technology and environmental changes.

1.1 Advance Fisheries Data Acquisition, Analysis, and Science Advice

1.2 Climate, Ecosystems, and Fisheries Initiative (CEFI) — [IRA]

1.3 Science Planning To Support Changing Ocean Use

1.4 Aquaculture

Activity 1.1: Advance Fisheries Data Acquisition

The Center will invest in technology, data systems, and infrastructure to improve stock assessments, account for climate change, and advance science in suppot of ecosystem-based fisheries management. IRA data acquisition funding will support several of these activities.

- Execute the first Integrated West Coast Pelagics Survey in 2025. This important achievement will capitalize on years of planning and design in collaboration with SWFSC. It will use new sampling methods and automated cloud-supported data classification, management, and reporting to provide data critical to stock assessments. — **[AT]**
- Support NMFS's National Survey and Data Acquisition Program (NaSDAP) activities on national coordination to optimize our fishery-independent sample and data collection, analysis, and distribution enterprise and identify additional resources needed to meet current and future priorities. — **[AT, CC]**
- Engage partners and interest-holders to identify requirements, capabilities, and resources that are needed to expand data collection for groundfish species in under- or unsampled areas.
- Apply advanced technologies, enhance surveys, and integrate science capabilities from NMFS IRA Strategic Initiatives to improve efficiency and resilience, evaluate key climate indicators (e.g., a more robust stoplight table for salmonids in the ocean), inform stock assessments, and support ecosystem-based fisheries management. — **[AT, CC]**
- Develop a list of groundfish science priorities to inform optimizing the use of current resources and identify areas for future investment and innovation.

Supports NMFS Annual Priorities 14 (Expand survey methods and modernize stock assessments to account for environmental changes) and 26 (Implement advanced sampling technologies to improve data collection for protected species [e.g., 'omics, UxS, acoustics, ASTER]).

Activity 1.2: Climate, Ecosystems, and Fisheries Initiative (CEFI)

The Center will continue to partner with SWFSC to lead and execute the U.S. West Coast implementation of CEFI through its shared Decision Support Team. This work includes collaborations across all four science divisions, OAR, NOS, and other parts of NMFS. It also includes collaboration with PFMC and, in particular, IRA-funded climate change-focused work at the Council. CEFI focuses on providing decision-makers with the actionable information they need to prepare for and respond to changing conditions, today and in the future. We will:

- Integrate into our science efforts output from a new ocean model (MOM6) that can better project future ocean conditions at timescales from seasonal to decadal and century. — **[CC]**
- Improve species and ecosystem modeling efforts that aim to understand the implications of climate change on trust resources and for management decisions. — **[CC]**
- Strengthen understanding of the connections between climate and the spatial, population, and community dynamics of marine species, fisheries, and people. — **[CC]**
- Develop more climate-informed decision support tools by incorporating species and ecosystem data into stock assessment and management strategies. — **[CC]**

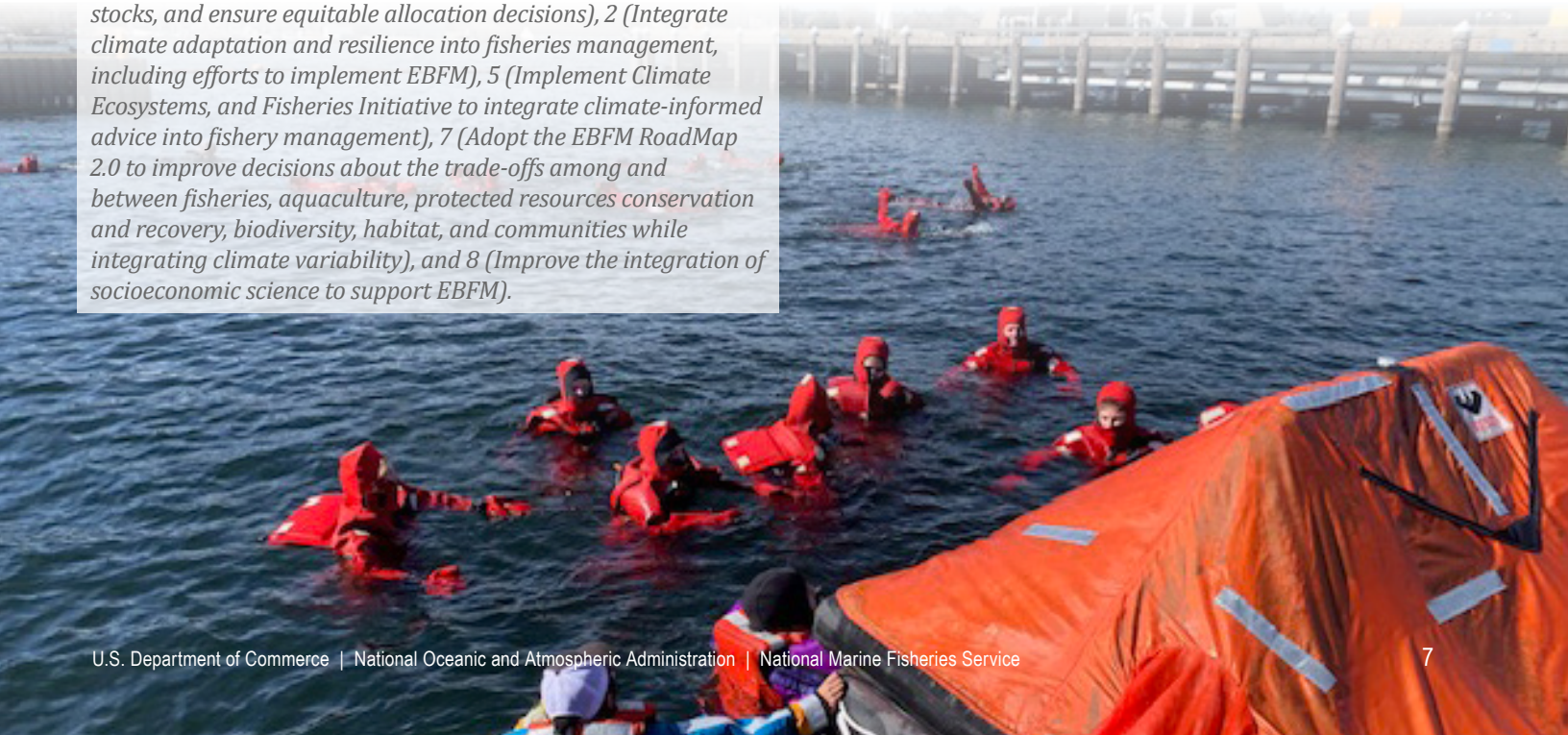
Supports NMFS Annual Priorities 1 (Engage with the U.S. Regional Fishery Management Councils to prevent overfishing, rebuild fish stocks, and ensure equitable allocation decisions), 2 (Integrate climate adaptation and resilience into fisheries management, including efforts to implement EBFM), 5 (Implement Climate Ecosystems, and Fisheries Initiative to integrate climate-informed advice into fishery management), 7 (Adopt the EBFM RoadMap 2.0 to improve decisions about the trade-offs among and between fisheries, aquaculture, protected resources conservation and recovery, biodiversity, habitat, and communities while integrating climate variability), and 8 (Improve the integration of socioeconomic science to support EBFM).

Activity 1.3: Science Planning to Support Changing Ocean Use

Human use of the ocean is changing and growing. We will continue to evaluate the impacts of offshore wind energy (OWE) projects and develop plans to mitigate them, guided by the 2024 Offshore Wind Energy Strategic Science Plan. We will also help the U.S. West Coast and the nation prepare for the growth of marine CO_2 removal efforts, and support offshore aquaculture.

- Continue to support the West Coast Region's (WCR) efforts on OSWE by providing data, maps, and scientific advice. This includes evaluating plans and monitoring to assess the long-term impacts of OWE.
- Begin survey mitigation research to understand impacts of OWE development on survey operations and explore new survey, statistical design, and sampling methods.
- Develop analytical frameworks that account for climate change predictions into planning and mitigating the impacts of OWE across the social-ecological system. — **[CC, EEJ]**
- Support NMFS's response to marine CO_2 removal efforts by providing technical assistance to regional office and Congressional affairs staff, defining science needs, and conducting basic research on species responses to proposed technologies. — **[CC]**

Supports NMFS Annual Priority 6 (Evaluate and communicate the effects of planned offshore energy activities on marine resources).



Activity 1.4: Aquaculture

We will develop science-based solutions to optimize aquaculture technology and support its commercial use to contribute to the nation's safe seafood supply. In partnership with tribes and industry, we will develop new technology, mitigate risk, enhance resilience to climate change, and reduce uncertainties for aquaculture production and management. The 2023 Aquaculture Science Strategic Plan guides our annual priorities:

- Develop research products and technologies for environmentally and economically sustainable marine aquaculture practices. — **[EEJ]**
- Reduce disease or genetic risks of aquaculture operations to wild stocks by developing a) vaccines and non-GMO methods for producing sterile fish and shellfish, and b) disease prevention strategies.
- Understand the impacts of multiple environmental stressors caused by climate change on commercially and ecologically important species. — **[CC]**
- Develop strategies to build resilience to ocean acidification, particularly for the shellfish industry. — **[CC]**
- Connect information on ecological interactions of shellfish aquaculture to management and permitting tools.

Supports NMFS Annual Priority 3 (Advance the National Seafood Strategy to strengthen the resilience of U.S. fisheries, improve seafood markets and trade, and increase aquaculture production).

GOAL 2

Safeguard protected species and propel their recovery.

(Supports VDOF Goal 1.4)

The Center supports NOAA's mission to recover ESA- and MMPA-protected species by providing science for salmon management, Southern Resident killer whale recovery, and ESA permitting, among other initiatives. This year, we will focus on the most pressing science needs that lay the groundwork for a new era in salmon management. We will use IRA funding and the near-term priorities identified in the 2023 Salmon Recovery Science Strategy to develop accessible science products that target the highest-priority Pacific salmon needs.

2.1 Integrated Model Development and Application

2.2 Restoration, Recovery, and Reintroduction Techniques

2.3 Toxics in Freshwater and Estuarine Environments

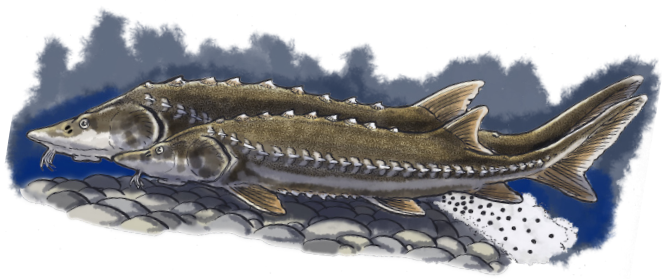
2.4 Ocean and Nearshore Ecology

Activity 2.1: Integrated Model Development and Application

We will create, connect, and refine salmon life-cycle modeling tools to guide U.S. West Coast salmon management decisions. With these simulation tools, resource managers can assess the impact of various management scenarios on at-risk salmon populations. We will establish a framework using this tool to model salmon populations throughout the U.S. West Coast in partnership with SWFSC and WCR. Outcomes of this effort include:

- Coordinate across natural resource salmon management partners (federal, state, tribal) to prioritize actions for salmon recovery under a changing climate. — **[CC, TT]**
- Develop generalized salmonid life-cycle modeling tools that evaluate benefits and tradeoffs using scenarios and directly inform WCR's natural resource management decisions, including support of Section 7 ESA consultations, Environmental Impact Statements, ESA listing decisions, restoration actions, and status and trend updates. — **[CC, TT]**
- Create modeling tools transferable to multiple salmonid species across U.S. West Coast salmon country. — **[CC, TT]**
- Formulate robust recovery strategy evaluations and scenarios that identify suites of actions that would likely achieve desired recovery levels most efficiently, accounting for trends in climate, habitat, and social factors. — **[CC, TT]**

Supports NMFS Annual Priorities 23 (Develop and implement models to predict the effect of climate change on protected species under our jurisdiction), 24 (Assess protected species vulnerability to climate change and incorporate results into conservation and recovery efforts), and 28 (Enhance science and research that supports transformative modeling to identify and prioritize high-impact restoration).



Activity 2.2: Restoration, Recovery, and Reintroduction Techniques

We will unify and standardize decision support tools for habitat assessments supporting salmon recovery efforts. These tools include habitat valuation for restoration planning, scenario building for future restoration and climate change, ecosystem-based forecasting, and indicators of habitat status, trends, and targets. Additionally, we will study the importance of genetic and phenotypic diversity to salmonid adaptation. This research will determine the genetic capacity of wild and hatchery stocks, particularly reintroduced populations, to adapt to a changing environment. Activities and outcomes include:

- Develop science-based indicators to improve habitat conservation and management decisions on the most meaningful restoration needed to recover salmon. — **[CC, TT]**
- Produce a web-based dashboard, accessible to our partner organizations, to archive habitat indicators and underlying data. — **[CC, TT]**
- Engage co-managers to guide and support implementation of indicators to ensure restoration actions support salmonid recovery. — **[CC, TT]**
- Reduce genetic barriers to recovery by evaluating and promoting adaptive traits in hatchery and natural populations. — **[CC, TT]**
- Enhance success of reintroductions through hatchery strategies to support high productivity of stocks used for recovery. — **[CC, TT]**
- Support the Columbia River System (CRS) through targeted research and advice in close partnership with WCR and others.
- Provide science and advice to WCR and partners to inform hatchery management and operations.

Supports NMFS Annual Priority 30 (Work in partnership with tribes and states from the Pacific northwest to restore wild salmon populations and provide stability for communities that depend on the Columbia River System).

Activity 2.3: Toxics in Freshwater and Estuarine Environments

We will study the effects of urban water quality on salmon populations and develop strategies for better utilizing toxicity data in salmon management decisions, such as ESA consultations. The work will focus on the threats posed by stormwater runoff, which can carry pollutants such as 6PPD-q, metals, and petroleum products, and how climate change intensifies these threats. Outcomes include:

- New methodologies for measuring pollutants in water and fish tissues. — **[AT]**
- Improve use of chemical water quality data in regional salmon management decisions. — **[TT]**
- Establish thresholds for stormwater toxicity across salmonid life stages and species.

Supports NMFS Annual Priority 27 (Develop advanced technology and innovative solutions to reduce bycatch and mitigate human impacts on protected species [e.g., innovative fishing gear, vessel strike reduction, bycatch reduction, real-time monitoring, noise abatement methods, stormwater runoff]).

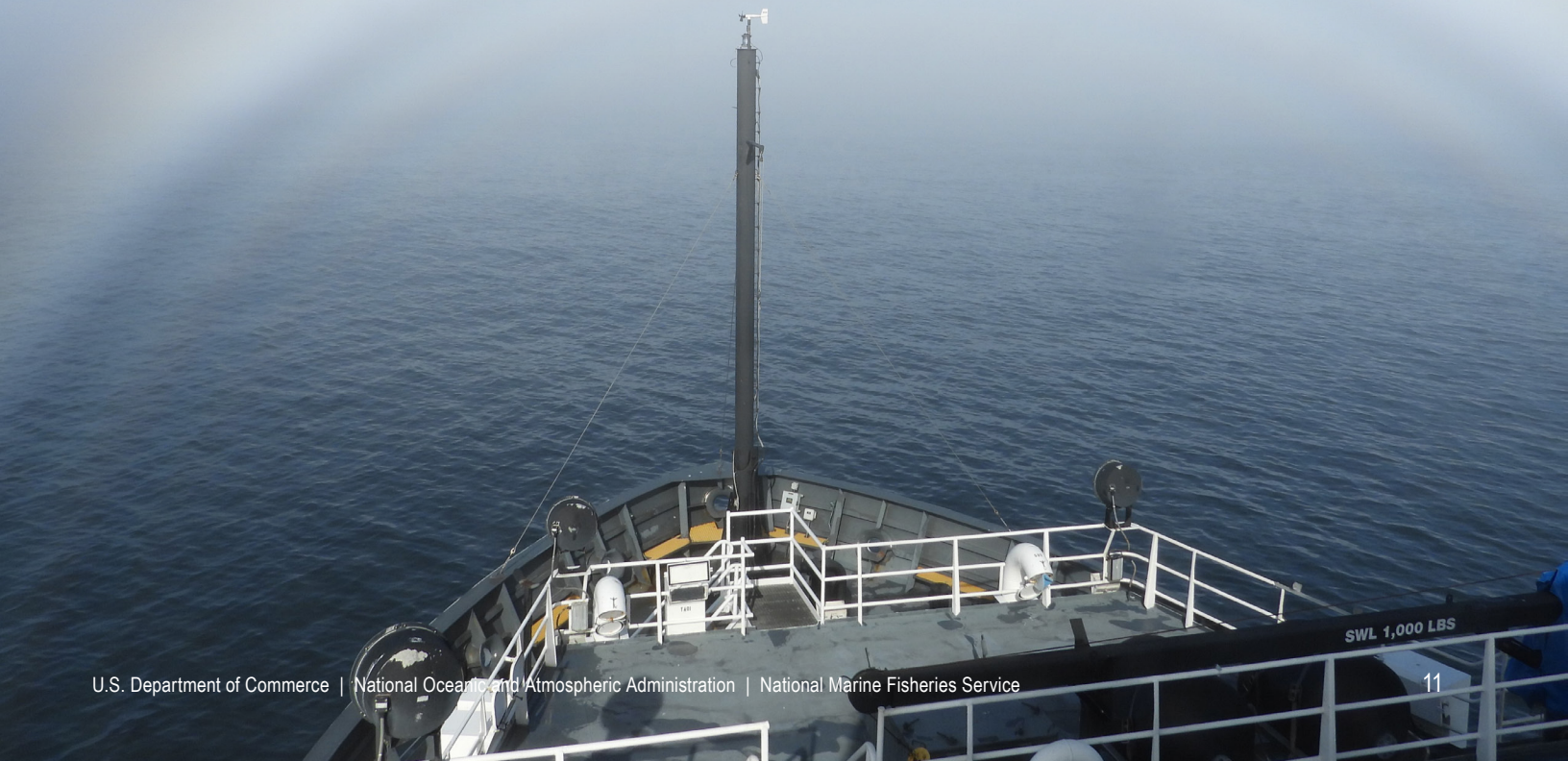
Activity 2.4: Ocean and Nearshore Ecology

We will develop and refine models to predict the effects of changing ocean conditions on salmon populations along the U.S. West Coast, incorporating parameters such as ocean productivity and size-selective mortality. Additionally, we will measure predation rates of outmigrating juvenile salmon and steelhead populations. We will use the project findings to improve life-cycle models, inform strategies to mitigate predation on salmon populations, and better understand early marine survival. Finally, we will study indicators of marine food web health to improve fisheries management and ecosystem assessment. Utilizing cutting-edge technologies, we will measure the abundance and diversity of phytoplankton and investigate how climate change affects the nutritional value of lower trophic levels.

Supports NMFS Annual Priority 23 (Develop and implement models to predict the effects of climate change on protected species under our jurisdiction).

Activities and outcomes include:

- Develop indicators of ocean productivity from the California Current to the Bering Sea that improve predictions of salmon survival, growth, and age at return. — **[CC]**
- Improve quantification of pinniped predation rates on outmigrating steelhead in the Salish Sea and of avian predation rates on juvenile salmon in the Columbia River plume. — **[AT, TT]**
- Better understand how salmon predator behavior, timing, location, and size selectivity impact salmon abundance. — **[AT]**
- Develop new indicators of primary production and lower trophic level energetics for improved fisheries management and ecosystem assessment. — **[CC, AT]**



GOAL 3

Diversify our workforce, promote equity, and improve our mission performance through organizational excellence.

(Supports VDOF Goals 2, 3, and 4)

The Center focuses on organizational excellence, facilities, partnerships, and communications to improve efficiency and support its science mission. The priorities discussed in this year's AGM focus on areas that require urgent attention, are driven by concerns and solutions raised by staff, and will result in the highest-efficiency improvements.

3.1 Facilities

3.2 Workforce Planning

3.3 Business Processes

3.4 Implement West Coast EEJ Strategy to Eliminate Systemic Barriers

3.5 Invest in Workforce Development and Wellbeing

Activity 3.1: Facilities

We will move forward in FY25 to support the diversity of science efforts at all of our facilities, and to re-evaluate and streamline small boat operations.

- **New Seattle Headquarters:** With a significant investment from the IRA, we will get closer to having the Montlake campus move to a new Seattle leased facility. We expect GSA to award the lease in FY25, and we will know the specific location. While moving through the leasing process, we will focus on planning to operate in a leased space, including building teams to support IT infrastructure in a hybrid workplace, lab, and common spaces, and governance models.
- **Manchester:** With the completed design of the new building at Manchester, we will move into the next steps of planning and construction. We will: 1) complete the construction of the new seawater treatment, distribution, and depuration system, and 2) move toward contracting for building the campus additions to support programs moving from Montlake, including ecotoxicology and ocean acidification research that were once housed at Mukilteo.
- **Western Regional Center (WRC):** We will continue to move forward with constructing an owned facility to house our Seattle area small boat operations and survey and observer teams' needs, etc.
- **Change management:** These changes to our facilities are significant. We will engage with change management professionals to be as strategic, proactive, and thoughtful as we can. This includes the work of our new cross-Center Change Management Team.

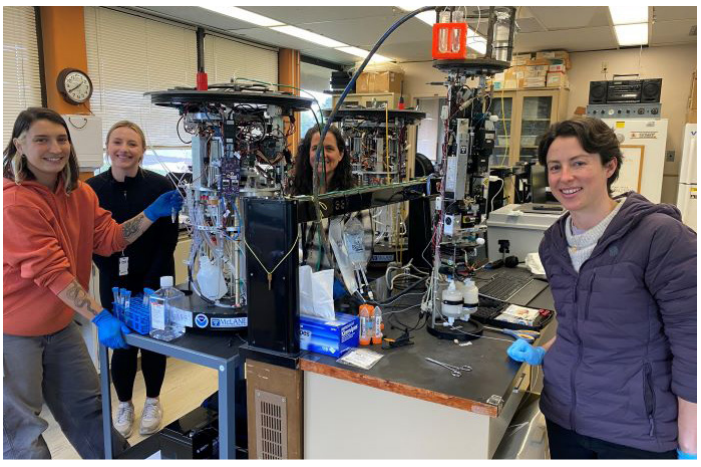
Supports NMFS Annual Priorities 37 (Implement a workplace policy and office layout to support a hybrid workforce) and 39 (Use activity-based planning to determine workplace needs and space requirements for major leases).

Activity 3.2: Workforce Planning

In addition to building its capacity to address climate change, NMFS aims to use the IRA investment to conduct transformative science and improve institutional health. The Center will prioritize a multiyear workforce strategy that includes succession and diversity considerations. Actions will include:

- Develop a workforce strategy that describes a path forward for optimizing opportunities resulting from generational turnover and meeting the science and societal needs of today and the future. We will continue to strategically hire new staff into all divisions, including through the opportunities afforded by IRA, to build on existing expertise, transfer knowledge, and bring new skills and ideas to our community.
- Staff the Genetics and Evolution Program so it can continue operating as a Center of Excellence for NWFSC and broader NMFS, including critical support for bioinformatics, forensics, and IRA-supported 'omics and eDNA projects. — **[AT]**
- Strengthen division leadership and administrative services by providing more support to mitigate administrative workloads on division directors and scientific staff. This includes streamlining administrative services across divisions.
- Support the IN FISH Program on the U.S. West Coast and other intern opportunities by investing both resources and staff to increase the recruitment pipeline in the Northwest.

Supports NMFS Annual Priority 34 (Increase recruitment efforts to under-represented groups for entry, mid-level, and senior leadership positions through continued investment in building recruitment pipelines such as IN FISH and partnerships with minority-service institutions).



Activity 3.3: Business Processes

Actions that support and empower the execution of research and science advice include:

- Create new tools and advance those that already exist (e.g., PPD) to better support budget planning and execution.
- Develop Center and division budgets consistently and transparently.
- Promote resilience by building teams who are cross-trained and able to back one another up.
- Build and share staff expertise on BAS and the Financial Data Management System.
- Accurately record and report costs, especially for surveys.
- Continue to develop, scope, and implement responsible end-to-end data stewardship practices, from data collection to data use, access, and publication.
- Assess the Center's small boat requirements and advance related processes to streamline maintenance and fleet management.
- Streamline property management.

Suppots NMFS Annual Priorities 38 (Improve budget planning, cost forecasting, and project development for infrastructure sustainment) and 39 (Use activity-based planning to determine workplace needs and space requirements for major leases).

Activity 3.4: Implement West Coast EEJ Strategy to Eliminate Systemic Barriers

We will work with other NMFS West Coast offices to advance the goals of NOAA's EEJ Strategy. We will gather information and resources to identify, connect with, and engage underserved communities across the U.S. West Coast.

- Implement the West Coast EEJ Community Engagement Plan. — **[EEJ, TT]**
- Implement the West Coast EEJ Implementation Plan in collaboration with other NMFS West Coast offices. — **[EEJ, TT]**

Supports NMFS Annual Priority 45 (Implement EEJ plans to continue to advance actions that lead to the elimination of barriers and allow our services to reach all communities more equitably and effectively).

Activity 3.5: Invest in Workforce Development and Wellbeing

We will continue to be intentional in fostering a community that thrives and produces results, with an emphasis on creating a culture of belonging.

- Support our Team for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (TIDE) and the Workplace Engagement and Collaboration Team (WECT) to champion efforts that amplify DEIA concepts at the Center.
- Support the new cohort of scientists by creating a sense of belonging and inclusion. — **[EEJ]**
- Invest in staff professional development with both Center-wide training opportunities and individual development plans.
- Support hiring officials' use of the full range of hiring authorities and processes.
- Enhance transparency on staffing decisions and promotion processes.
- Plan and hold a 2025 Science Symposium in partnership with WECT.

Supports NMFS Annual Priorities 33 (Maintain and enhance business practices and/or programs to align with the U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being), 35 (Strengthen the agency's commitment to DEIA by promoting comprehensive employee training and enhancing metrics for accountability), and 36 (Provide and promote training and competency development at all levels of the organization to enhance technical and leadership skills).

In Closing

This AGM provides a framework for short-term planning, but it is equally important to engage in ongoing discussions about our long-term vision and strategy. The Vivid Description of the Future that we painted for 2025 has served as a guiding light, inspiring our work and shaping our achievements over the past seven years. While we acknowledge that there's still more to be done, the foundation we've laid is strong.

The AGM is a roadmap for FY25, but it's also a platform for ongoing dialogue about what lies ahead:

- Our upcoming transition to the new Seattle facility, and strategic investments in Manchester and the Western Regional Center, present exciting opportunities to enhance our capabilities and further realize our goals.
- As we welcome new staff members, we must cultivate a culture that values diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging. This will enrich our work and position us to attract and retain top talent.
- The impending retirements and the phase-out of IRA funding offer a unique opportunity to reevaluate our workforce and identify areas where technology can enhance efficiency and safety. By embracing innovation and streamlining our processes, we can ensure that our resources are aligned with our highest priorities without overextending our dedicated team.
- The impending retirements also emphasize the importance of information transfer and succession planning. We will continue our workforce planning efforts in order to build upon years of expertise and cultivate success during these transitions.
- To effectively address our constituents' urgent management and conservation needs, we must coordinate our scientific efforts and prioritize research that delivers the most impactful outcomes.

This AGM is the product not only of input for 2025, but also builds on lessons learned from past AGMs and your feedback. We recognize that everyone's perspectives are important. Therefore, and always, we welcome input on this AGM to improve future years' AGMs.

Every one of you—from scientists to analysts, from observers to administrators—is essential to the continued success of the Center and its vision, mission, values, and goals. We look forward to working with you in 2025 and beyond to develop and implement the long-term visions and strategies that will make our work essential and meaningful.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication and hard work. It's your efforts that have brought us this far, and we look forward to your continued contributions in the coming year.

U.S. Secretary of Commerce
Gina M. Raimondo

Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere
Dr. Richard W. Spinrad

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
Janet Coit

September 2024

fisheries.noaa.gov

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

National Marine
Fisheries Service
Northwest Fisheries Science Center
2725 Montlake Boulevard East
Seattle, Washington 98112