

PACIFIC SALMON ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT REVIEW SCOPING AND WORKPLAN

The Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) are jointly responsible for developing initial EFH provisions in fishery management plans (FMPs), and for periodically reviewing EFH provisions, including describing and identifying EFH, adverse effects, conservation measures, and other elements described in 50 CFR Part 600 Subpart J. Council Operating Procedure 22 describes a two phase process for conducting EFH reviews. This agenda item represents the start of the Pacific Coast Salmon EFH review.

Under the Council's EFH review process, Phase 1 is focused on collecting and evaluating new habitat information by species and life stage, as well as human activities that may adversely affect EFH. Phase 1 typically includes issuance of a call for information to assemble new and newly available reports, data, literature, and other information that may inform the EFH review. This information is compiled in a Phase 1 report and presented at a Council meeting. If the Council determines that new information warrants changes to the current EFH provisions in the FMP, then the Council may embark on a second phase, during which specific changes to EFH provisions are developed. A new scope would be adopted for the second phase. If revisions to the existing EFH provisions are not warranted, the review is concluded after completing Phase 1.

National Marine Fisheries Service Regulation and Guidance

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) Sections 303(a)(7) and 305(b) describe the requirements to include EFH information in FMPs. The EFH Regulatory Guidance (50 CFR Part 600 Subpart J) provides detailed guidance on the EFH provisions (see Scope, below). In addition, the NMFS Procedure 03-201-15 [Guidance to Refine the Description and Identification of Essential Fish Habitat](#) provides additional information and details on EFH reviews.

Objectives

The overarching objectives for all EFH reviews are to ensure that the EFH provisions in the Council's FMPs are consistent with the best scientific information available, and to ensure a transparent and efficient science-based process for review of new information and consideration of any potential changes to EFH provisions.

The specific objectives of Phase 1 of the Salmon EFH review are to 1) evaluate published and unpublished scientific literature and reports, information from interested parties, and previously unavailable or inaccessible data, to 2) make a recommendation to the Council as to whether the body of new information warrants consideration of changes to EFH provisions. Phase 2 objectives would be identified if the Council moves forward after considering the Phase 1 report.

Scope

Federal EFH regulations describe 10 areas ("mandatory contents") to be addressed in FMPs:

1. Identification and Description of EFH
2. MSA Fishing activities that may adversely impact EFH

3. Non-MSA fishing activities that may adversely affect EFH
4. Non-fishing activities that may adversely affect EFH
5. Cumulative impacts
6. Conservation and enhancement
7. Prey species
8. Habitat areas of particular concern (HAPCs)
9. Research and information needs
10. Review and revision of EFH components of FMPs

The review phase will address each of the above areas to review new information that may warrant updating any of the components, and to generate recommendations to the Council regarding next steps in the review/revision process.

Staffing

Council and NMFS staff leads (Kerry Griffin and Eric Chavez):

- Provide overall project coordination
- Participate in evaluation of data, literature, and other information, related to potential updates of salmon EFH provisions
- Ensure timely reporting and recommendations to the Council
- Provide updates and coordination with Council and NMFS WCR leadership, as appropriate
- Coordinate with GIS Analyst and NWFSC staff on GIS needs and products

NWFSC staff (Correigh Greene):

- Serves as the liaison with NWFSC staff and management (and SWFSC as appropriate)
- Provides advice to the project team on science-based approaches to reviewing and updating salmon EFH
- Participates in evaluation of data, literature, and other information, related to potential updates of salmon EFH provisions
- Coordinates with GIS Analyst and NMFS and Council staff on GIS needs and products

GIS Analyst (Stephanie Onisko):

- Coordinate and communicate with NMFS and Council staff leads as necessary
- Conduct spatial analysis and produce GIS products as necessary

Council Advisory Bodies, Council Staff, State Staff, Tribal Coordination:

- The Council's Habitat Committee, Salmon Technical Team, and Salmon Advisory Subpanel will periodically review progress and provide feedback and advice at appropriate points throughout the review process.
- The Council's Salmon Staff Officer (Angela Forristall) will help coordinate presentations and review of materials as appropriate.
- The four states may designate DFW leads to participate in the review process as appropriate
- The Project Team should ensure adequate opportunity for tribal review and comment on relevant materials, and opportunities to provide recommendations as appropriate.

Proposed Schedule

Date	Milestone
April 2025	Adopt scope/schedule/team per Council Operating Procedure 22; consider call for data and information, initiate literature review and summary
October 2025	Review team considers results of the call for data, the literature review, and begins development of the Phase 1 Report, which will include recommendations, if any, for the scope of Phase 2.
April 2026	Phase 1 report for PFMC, literature review, etc. Action: Decide whether there is sufficient information to initiate a Phase 2.
March/April 2027	Phase 2 report for PFMC meeting to consider range of alternatives (i.e., the analytical document) and possibly a preliminary preferred alternative
June 2027	Final action. Council adopts FPA, FMP language, revised Appendix A.

PFMC
03/21/2025