

## HABITAT COMMITTEE REPORT ON HABITAT MATTERS

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

### **Pacific Marine Estuarine Partnership**

The HC received a presentation on the Pacific Marine Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEP). PMEP works with Federal, Tribal, state, nongovernmental organizations, tribes, and other partners to protect, enhance, and restore healthy nearshore and estuarine fish habitats on the west coast. The current focus is the role of estuarine habitat for juvenile fish. PMEP has produced reports to summarize the current state of knowledge, and has made information available through [online mapping tools](#). These tools support queries such as locating estuaries best-suited for restoration efforts to enhance salmon habitat or where coho salmon are most at risk.

PMEP produced the following reports:

- [An Inventory and Classification of U.S. West Coast Estuaries \(2014\)](#)
- [The State of Knowledge for Juveniles of Focal Invertebrate and Fish Species \(2014\)](#)
- [Nursery Functions of West Coast Estuaries: Data Assessment for Juveniles of 15 Focal Fish and Crustacean Species \(2015\)](#)
- [Eelgrass Habitats on the U.S. West Coast: State of the Knowledge of Eelgrass Ecosystem Services and Eelgrass Extent \(2018\)](#)

Additionally, PMEP is working on an assessment of current and historic tidal wetland extent in CA and WA, to expand the work piloted in Oregon, using models of extreme water levels and high resolution elevation data. A follow-up project will incorporate information on areas that have been restored.

PMEP also provides some funds to partners each year for habitat assessment and restoration projects that address PMEP priorities.

NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation is providing new funding for a nearshore marine spatial data assessment that will be launched with a call for data followed by a State of the Knowledge Report. The geographic regions in the nearshore framework are similar to the Councils' biogeographic regions, so new data development and analysis efforts could inform Council informational products and efforts, such as the annual State of the Ecosystem report.

### **Columbia Flows**

Several members provided updates concerning high flow levels in the Columbia River. The final water supply forecast was 124 percent of average at The Dalles, as of May 29. The shape of the runoff is ideal for outmigrating salmon. Uncontrolled spill has increased total dissolved gas levels in the mainstem above state dissolved gas standards.

## **Puget Sound and Oregon Salmon Habitat**

NMFS is looking at estuarine and nearshore floodplain habitat status in Puget Sound in conjunction with status reviews for Chinook salmon. The same approach is being supported for Oregon coho.

## **Beavers and Salmon Production**

PSMFC recently produced a series of videos on [“Living with Beaver”](#). The latest video, which is soon to be posted, discusses how beavers provide low-gradient, nutrient-rich areas for coho juvenile winter survival.

## **Groundfish Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)**

The HC discussed the recent Groundfish EFH process and is documenting its thoughts and recommendations for improving any future EFH process. The HC is prepared to work with Council and staff to share these thoughts when appropriate.

PFMC  
6/08/18