

salmon, and threatened SnR, MCR, LCR, and UWR steelhead under section 4(d) of the ESA have not been promulgated by NMFS. This notice of receipt of an application requesting takes of these species is issued as a precaution in the event that NMFS issues protective regulations that prohibit takes of threatened LCR and/or UWR chinook salmon, and/or threatened SnR, MCR, LCR, and/or UWR steelhead. The initiation of a 30-day public comment period on the application, including its proposed takes of threatened LCR and UWR chinook salmon, and threatened SnR, MCR, LCR, and UWR steelhead does not presuppose the contents of the eventual protective regulations.

Background

From 1996–1999, the ODFW and WDFW sport and commercial fisheries have been managed under the terms of the Columbia River Fishery Management Plan (CRFMP). Since NMFS was a signatory party to the CRFMP, and approval of the CRFMP was a federal action subject to section 7 consultation, incidental take associated with the ODFW and WDFW fisheries was authorized in biological opinions issued on the CRFMP. NMFS has advised the states that, with the expiration of the CRFMP, and absent any subsequent agreement among the parties to *U.S. v. Oregon*, there is no longer a federal action that provides a nexus for section 7 consultation. Because the immediate prospects for reaching an agreement were uncertain, ODFW and WDFW have applied for a one-year ESA section 10(a)(1)(B) permit for incidental takes of ESA-listed adult and juvenile salmonids associated with sport and commercial fisheries during 2000 on non-listed species in the lower and middle Columbia River and its tributaries in the Pacific Northwest.

Conservation Plan

The Conservation Plan prepared by ODFW and WDFW describes measures designed to monitor, minimize, and mitigate the incidental takes of ESA-listed anadromous salmonids associated with some or all of the following fisheries which are expected to occur during 2000 with approximate dates as specified:

Winter commercial sturgeon fishery in the lower Columbia River: January thru February.

Winter commercial salmon fishery in the lower Columbia River: February 15 thru March 10.

Spring chinook salmon sport fishery in the lower Columbia River: January 1 thru March 11.

Spring chinook salmon sport fishery on returns from net-pen release programs in the lower Columbia River: entire year

Steelhead sport fishery in the lower Columbia River: May 16 thru December 31.

Spring chinook salmon commercial fishery at Youngs Bay, Tongue Point Basin, and Blind Slough in the lower Columbia River: mid-February thru mid-June.

Spring chinook salmon test fishery near the Reed Island area in the lower Columbia River: April

Spring chinook salmon test fishery in select areas of the lower Columbia River: February thru July.

Spring chinook salmon/steelhead fishery in the middle Columbia River near the outlet to Ringold Hatchery (Spring Creek): May 15 thru July 31 for chinook salmon, June 16 thru December 31 for steelhead.

Spring chinook salmon subsistence fishery in the middle Columbia River below Priest Rapids Dam for the Wanapum Tribe: May thru July.

Smelt commercial fishery/test fishery in the mainstem Columbia River and tributaries, smelt recreational fishery primarily in the tributaries of the Columbia River, and anchovy/herring commercial bait fishery in the Columbia River estuary: entire year.

Shad commercial fishery in the lower Columbia River: May and June.

Shad commercial fishery in the Washougal Reef area of the lower Columbia River: May and June.

Shad recreational fishery in the lower Columbia River: entire year; a sturgeon recreational fishery in the lower Columbia River: entire year.

Sturgeon tagging stock assessment project in the lower Columbia River: May thru July.

Warm water recreational fishery (primarily for spiny-rays) in the lower and middle Columbia River up to Priest Rapids Dam: entire year.

ESA-listed fish incidental mortalities associated with the ODFW and WDFW fishery programs are requested at levels specified in the Permit application. ODFW/WDFW are proposing to limit state in-river fisheries such that the incidental impacts on ESA-listed salmonids will be minimized. Six alternatives for the ODFW and WDFW fisheries were provided in the Plan, including: (1) The no action alternative; (2) the proposed conservation plan alternative (based on 1996–1999 Management Agreement Limits); (3) historic fishing levels; (4) CRFMP fishing levels; (5) levels based on the Willamette Subbasin Plan; and (6) 1996–99 Actual Harvest Rates.

Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact

The EA package includes a draft EA and a draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) which concludes that issuing the incidental take permit is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. Three Federal action alternatives have been analyzed in the EA, including: (1) The no action alternative; (2) issue a permit without conditions; and (3) issue a permit with conditions.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the ESA and the NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1506.6). NMFS will evaluate the application, associated documents, and comments submitted thereon to determine whether the application meets the requirements of the NEPA regulations and section 10(a) of the ESA. If it is determined that the requirements are met, a permit will be issued for incidental takes of ESA-listed anadromous salmonids under the jurisdiction of NMFS. The final NEPA and permit determinations will not be completed until after the end of the 30-day comment period and will fully consider all public comments received during the comment period. NMFS will publish a record of its final action in the Federal Register.

Dated: January 28, 2000.

Wanda L. Cain,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 00–2290 Filed 1–28–00; 4:20 pm]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 012800C]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Groundfish Oversight Committee and Groundfish Advisory Panel on February 16, 2000, to consider actions affecting New England fisheries in the exclusive

economic zone. Recommendations from these groups will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: The meeting will be held on February 16, 2000, at 9:30 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Sheraton Ferncroft Hotel, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923; telephone 978-777-2500.

Council Address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, The Tannery-Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950, telephone 978-465-0492.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council (978) 465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Groundfish Oversight Committee and Groundfish Advisory Panel will hear a presentation by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center on current information regarding fish stock boundaries in the region. The Committee and Panel will review problems and issues identified during the scoping process of Amendment 13 to the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan and organize the amendment development strategy. This organization may include the formation of working groups consisting of advisory panel and committee members, and will include the initial tasking of work to be completed by the Council Staff and Plan Development Team.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, these issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this document and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting dates.

Dated: January 28, 2000.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 00-2342 Filed 2-2-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 012800A]

New England Fishery Management Council; Public Meeting

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of public meeting.

SUMMARY: The New England Fishery Management Council (Council) is scheduling a public meeting of its Research Steering and Experimental Fisheries Committee in February, 2000. Recommendations from the Committee will be brought to the full Council for formal consideration and action, if appropriate.

DATES: The meeting will held on Wednesday, February 16, 2000, at 9 a.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Sheraton Ferncroft Hotel, 50 Ferncroft Road, Danvers, MA 01923; telephone (978) 777-2500.

Council Address: New England Fishery Management Council, 50 Water Street, The Tannery-Mill 2, Newburyport, MA 01950, telephone 978-465-0492.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Paul J. Howard, Executive Director, New England Fishery Management Council 978-465-0492.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Committee will finalize recommendations on regional research priorities and forward them to the NMFS Regional Administrator for consideration. The Committee also will discuss related issues, including a draft Request for Proposals concerning the expenditure of funds appropriated by Congress for the conduct of collaborative research involving the New England groundfish. Other issues to be approved relate to the Committee's role in the review of proposals submitted in response to the RFP. The Committee may also discuss how to disburse funds collected under 2000 Total Allowable Catch research set-aside proposed in Framework 13 to the Sea Scallop Fishery Management Plan.

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before this Council for discussion, these issues may not be the subject of formal Council action during this meeting. Council action will be restricted to those issues specifically listed in this document and any issues arising after publication of this notice that require

emergency action under section 305(c) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, provided the public has been notified of the Council's intent to take final action to address the emergency.

Special Accommodations

This meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Paul J. Howard (see **ADDRESSES**) at least 5 days prior to the meeting date.

Dated: January 28, 2000.

Bruce C. Morehead,

Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.
[FR Doc. 00-2343 Filed 2-2-00; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Technology Administration

Technology Administration Fellows Program

AGENCY: Technology Administration.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Technology Administration is seeking private sector organizations to sponsor individuals to participate in the Technology Administration Fellows Program. Sponsors will nominate individuals who, if accepted by the Technology Administration, will spend up to one year at the Technology Administration, conducting research studies involving public policy on technology matters.

DATE: Letters of interest will be accepted on a rolling basis.

ADDRESSES AND CONTACT INFORMATION: Applications should be submitted to, and for further information contact: Ms. Joyce Hasty, Office of the Under Secretary for Technology, U.S. Department of Commerce, 14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW, Room 4823, Washington, D.C. 20230; telephone (202) 482-5804.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority: This Program is authorized under 15 U.S.C. 272(c)(2).

Program Description/Objectives

Under the Technology Administration Fellows Program (Program), private sector organizations (Sponsors) nominate individuals to spend up to one year working at the Technology Administration (TA), within the Department of Commerce (Department). Initial agreements will be for six months, with the opportunity to extend that period for an additional six months.