

providing a programmatic analysis, NOAA intends to use this document to approve future site-specific actions, including grant actions, so long as the activity being proposed is within the range of alternatives and scope of potential environmental consequences considered within this NEPA analysis. Any future site-specific restoration activities proposed by NOAA that are not within the scope of alternatives or environmental consequences considered in this PEIS will require additional analysis under NEPA.

NOAA has determined that two alternatives are reasonable and meet the purpose and need. These are Alternative 1—Current Management and Alternative 2—Technical Assistance.

“Current Management,” the No Action Alternative, is a comprehensive restoration approach that includes activities such as technical assistance, on-the-ground riverine and coastal habitat restoration activities, and land and water acquisition activities. For programmatic analyses of on-going programs, where program activities are being analyzed as opposed to a single specific project action, the No Action Alternative can be interpreted as “no change from current management” (CEQ 40 Questions, 46 FR 18026 (March 23, 1981). Riverine and coastal habitat restoration activities in this alternative include but are not limited to, fish passage projects; channel, bank and floodplain restoration; buffer area and watershed revegetation; saltmarsh restoration; oyster restoration; marine debris removal; submerged aquatic vegetation restoration; invasive species removal; and coral restoration.

“Technical Assistance” is an alternative approach that includes no on-the-ground restoration, and is limited to activities including project planning, modeling, feasibility studies, engineering and design studies, and permitting activities.

Impacts Analysis: This DPEIS presents NOAA’s restoration activities and their environmental consequences grouped into three categories of restoration activities: Technical assistance; on-the-ground riverine and coastal habitat restoration activities; and land and water acquisition activities. All three of these restoration categories comprise the “Current Management” alternative. Technical assistance activities are typically minimally-intrusive, relatively low-cost and do not require extensive on-the-ground activities to be implemented. On-the-ground restoration activities include all of the physical riverine and coastal restoration that the NOAA RC supports. Land and water acquisition activities

involve transactions of ownership, usage rights, or access. This alternative is anticipated to have typically long-term beneficial and short-term adverse impacts on the affected environment of various magnitudes and intensities, which are described in the DPEIS.

The “Technical Assistance” alternative relies heavily, if not exclusively, on external sources of funding to conduct on-the-ground implementation. NOAA resources would only be focused on advisory or technical assistance aspects of the restoration work. The technical assistance activities would generally cause mostly indirect, long-term beneficial impacts, with short-term adverse impacts for more intrusive monitoring and sampling techniques.

Request for Comment: The publication date of this notice constitutes the start of the comment period under NEPA for the PEIS. NOAA encourages all parties with an interest in or who are affected by habitat restoration activities to provide suggestions and comments. Comments are specifically requested regarding the alternatives, scope of analysis, assessment of impacts, and the process described in Appendix A for determining which future projects are covered by this analysis. For more detailed background information, including program descriptions, restoration project types, and the previously mentioned environmental assessment documents, please visit the NOAA Restoration Center Web site. Interested parties should provide written comments by March 20, 2015.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 661; 16 U.S.C. 1891a.

Dated: January 26, 2015.

Frederick C. Sutter,

*Director, Office of Habitat Conservation,
National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

RIN 0648–XD724

Fishing Capacity Reduction Program for the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery

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

ACTION: Notice of loan repayment.

SUMMARY: NMFS issues this notice to inform interested parties that the Oregon coastal Dungeness crab sub-loan in the fishing capacity reduction program for the Pacific Coast Groundfish Fishery has been repaid. Therefore, buyback fee collections on Oregon coastal Dungeness crab will cease for all landings after December 31, 2014.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before 5 p.m. EST February 13, 2015.

ADDRESSES: Send comments about this notice to Paul Marx, Chief, Financial Services Division, NMFS, Attn: Oregon Coastal Dungeness Crab Buyback, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael A. Sturtevant at (301) 427–8799 or *Michael.A.Sturtevant@noaa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: On November 16, 2004, NMFS published a **Federal Register** document (69 FR 67100) proposing regulations to implement an industry fee system for repaying the reduction loan. The final rule was published July 13, 2005 (70 FR 40225) and fee collection began on September 8, 2005. Interested persons should review these for further program details.

The Oregon coastal Dungeness crab sub-loan of the Pacific Coast Groundfish Capacity Reduction (Buyback) loan in the amount of \$1,367,545.28 will be repaid in full upon receipt of buyback fees on landings through December 31, 2014. NMFS has received \$2,117,701.75 to repay the principal and interest on this sub-loan since fee collection began September 8, 2005. Based on buyback fees received to date, landings after December 31, 2014 will not be subject to the buyback fee. Therefore, buyback loan fees will no longer be collected in the Oregon coastal Dungeness crab fishery on future landings.

Buyback fees not yet forwarded to NMFS for Oregon coastal Dungeness crab landings through December 31, 2014 should be forwarded to NMFS immediately. Any overpayment of buyback fees submitted to NMFS will be refunded on a pro-rata basis to the fish buyers/processors based upon best available fish ticket landings data. The fish buyers/processors should return excess buyback fees collected to the harvesters, including buyback fees collected but not yet remitted to NMFS for landings after December 31, 2014. Any discrepancies in fees owed and fees paid must be resolved immediately. After the sub-loan is closed, no further adjustments to fees paid and fees received can be made.

Dated: January 23, 2015.

Basil Brown,

Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Western Pacific Fishery Management Council; Public Meetings

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

ACTION: Notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Eight Regional Fishery Management Councils (RFMCs) will convene a meeting of representatives of their respective Scientific and Statistical Committee (SSC) in Honolulu, HI.

DATES: The meeting will be held on February 23, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., February 24, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and February 25, 2015, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The meeting will be held at the Ala Moana Hotel Garden Lanai, 410 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu, HI 96814. Host Council: Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, 1164 Bishop Street, Suite 1400, Honolulu, HI 96813. For specific times and agendas, see **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kitty M. Simonds, Executive Director, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council; telephone: (808) 522-8220.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Magnuson Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) requires that each Council maintain and utilize its SSCs to assist in the development, collection, evaluation, and peer review of information relevant to the development and amendment of fishery management plans (FMPs). In addition, the MSA mandates that each SSC shall provide its Council ongoing scientific advice for fishery management decisions, including recommendations for acceptable biological catch (ABC), preventing overfishing, maximum sustainable yield, and achieving rebuilding targets, and reports on stock status and health, bycatch, habitat status, social and economic impacts of management measures, and sustainability of fishing practices. The MSA also requires the Council to consider the ecosystem in managing the stocks in the FMPs.

At its May 2014 meeting, the Council Coordination Committee (CCC; a group consisting of the leadership from the eight Regional Fishery Management Councils), recommended that a fifth National SSC Workshop be convened to address uncertainties, data-limited situations, and ecosystem considerations in the fishery management process and Ecosystems Based Fishery Management (EBFM). Therefore, the purpose of this meeting is to examine the approaches being taken around the United States by the Council SSCs in addressing biological and management uncertainties, data-limited stocks, habitat and ecological variabilities in EBFM with considerations of a changing climate.

8:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., Monday, February 23, 2015

1. Welcome Remarks
2. Introductions
3. SUBTHEME 1.a: ABC Specification for Data-Limited and Model-Resistant Stocks
 - A. Keynote Presentation: Managing data-poor fisheries down under
 - B. Keynote Presentation: Progress and roadblocks in the estimation of stock status and catch limits for global fisheries
 - C. Round Robin Session: Setting ABCs for data-limited/model-resistant stocks
 - D. Preliminary Q&A to the presenters
 - E. Plenary Discussion: ABC specification for data-limited and model-resistant stocks
4. SUBTHEME 1.b: Implementation of National Standard 2 in the Face of Uncertainty
 - A. Keynote Presentation: National Standard 2 in determining best scientific information available
 - B. Plenary Discussion: Implementation of National Standard 2 in the face of uncertainties
5. Develop Specific Recommendation to the CCC on Subtheme 1

8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Tuesday, February 24, 2015

6. SUBTHEME 2: Evaluating Existing ABC Control Rules: Issues, Challenges and Solutions
 - A. Keynote Presentation: Addressing uncertainties in stock assessment in a variable environment
 - B. Keynote Presentation: Use of Management Strategy Evaluation to assess performance of harvest control rules
 - C. Keynote Presentation: Comparing performance among alternative ABC control rules
 - D. Round Robin Session: Evaluation

- of the current ABC control rules (with emphasis on how each council monitors the performance of the control rules, issues, challenges, and solutions)
- E. Preliminary Q&A to the presenters
- F. Plenary Discussion: Evaluating existing ABC control rules: Issues, challenges and solutions
7. Develop Specific Recommendation to the CCC for Subtheme 2
8. SUBTHEME 3.a: Incorporating Ecological, Environmental, and Climate Variability in Stock Assessment and Ecosystem Based Fishery Management
 - A. Keynote Presentation: Incorporating ecological, environmental, and climate considerations in stock assessments and ecosystem-based fishery management
 - B. Plenary Discussion: Incorporating ecological, environmental, and climate variability in stock assessment and ecosystem based fishery management

8:30 a.m.–5 p.m., Wednesday, February 25, 2015

- C. Keynote presentation: Projecting climate change impacts on fish and fisheries
- D. Keynote presentation: Shifting species distribution with climate change
- E. Plenary Discussion: Incorporating ecological, environmental, and climatic variability in stock assessments and ecosystem based fishery management
9. Develop Specific Recommendation to the CCC for Subtheme 3.a
10. SUBTHEME 3.b: Building Habitat Condition in the Stock Assessment Process and Fishery Management Strategies
 - A. Keynote Presentation: The Habitat Assessment Improvement Plan: Collecting the habitat data to enhance stock assessment
 - B. Plenary Discussion: Building habitat condition in the stock assessment process and fishery management strategies
 - C. Keynote Presentation: Aspects of Habitat of Particular Concern for fish population dynamics and fishery management
 - D. Plenary Discussion: Building habitat condition in the stock assessment process and fishery management strategies
11. Develop Specific Recommendation to the CCC for Subtheme 3.b

Although non-emergency issues not contained in this agenda may come before these groups for discussion, in accordance with the MSA, those issues