

**TABLE 1—PARTICIPATION IN PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THE PARTIAL AUDIT MODEL EM EFP**

Fishing year	Number of participant vessels	ASM coverage level (percent)
2016 .....	14	14
2017 .....	5	16
2018 .....	5	15

On February 15, 2019, The Nature Conservancy, along with project partners, submitted a request to renew this EFP for the 2019 fishing year, as part of an ongoing effort to pilot EM in the fishery. Work conducted under the proposed EFP would help refine proposed standards for a comprehensive EM program in the groundfish fishery. The proposed participant list includes five vessels, all of which participated in this EFP in fishing year 2018. Together, they are expected to take an estimated 235 trips in fishing year 2019. At 31 percent observer coverage, this would equate to roughly 75 EFP trips.

Vessels participating in this EFP would use EM in lieu of human ASMs, and in addition to Northeast Fishery Observer Program (NEFOP) observers, on groundfish trips selected for observer coverage. Vessels would adhere to a vessel-specific Vessel Monitoring Plan (VMP) detailing at-sea catch handling protocols. An EM service provider would review 100 percent of the video footage. The provider would also produce an EM summary report identifying, counting, and generating weight estimates for all groundfish discards, which it would submit to the NMFS Greater Atlantic Fisheries Regional Office. These data would be used for catch accounting purposes on trips selected for ASM coverage. EM data would not be used for catch accounting in place of observer data on NEFOP trips. However, the information generated through this EM project could facilitate comparisons between cameras and human observers in the future. Following the EM service provider's review, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center would conduct a secondary review of the EM summary reports for all or a subset of EFP trips.

Under this EFP, participating vessels would be exempt from minimum fish size requirements (§ 648.83(a)) for Northeast multispecies, for sampling purposes only; and ocean pout, windowpane flounder, and Atlantic wolffish possession prohibitions (§ 648.86(l)), for sampling purposes only. Vessels would also be exempt from their sector's third-party monitoring program requirements (§ 648.87(b)(1)(v)(B)) only; all other

standard sector reporting and monitoring requirements, such as using dealer-reported landings and vessel trip reports, would still apply. Vessels would be assigned observer coverage at the fishing year 2019 ASM coverage level of 31 percent, which is a combination of NEFOP and ASM coverage. All catch of allocated groundfish stocks would be deducted from the appropriate sector's allocation. Legal-sized regulated groundfish would be retained and landed as required by the Northeast Multispecies Fishery Management Plan. Undersized groundfish would be handled according to the VMP guidelines in view of cameras and returned to the sea as quickly as possible. All other species would be handled per normal commercial fishing operations. No legal-size regulated groundfish would be discarded, unless otherwise permitted through regulatory exemptions granted to the participating vessel's sector.

If approved, the applicant may request minor modifications to the EFP throughout the year. EFP modifications and extensions may be granted without further notice if they are deemed essential to facilitate completion of the proposed research and have minimal impacts that do not change the scope or impact of the initially approved EFP request. Any fishing activity conducted outside the scope of the exempted fishing activity would be prohibited.

**Authority:** 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: April 9, 2019.

**Jennifer M. Wallace,**

*Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

**RIN 0648-XG946**

### Meeting of the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee

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

**ACTION:** Notice of open public meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice sets forth the proposed schedule and agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee's (MAFAC's) Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force (CBP Task Force). The CBP

Task Force will discuss the issues outlined in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** below.

**DATES:** The meeting will be held April 23, 2019 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. PT and on April 24, 2019 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. PT.

**ADDRESSES:** The meeting will be held at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront, 1401 SW Naito Pkwy., Portland, OR 97201; 503-226-7600.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Katherine Cheney; NMFS West Coast Region; 503-231-6730; email: [Katherine.Cheney@noaa.gov](mailto:Katherine.Cheney@noaa.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Notice is hereby given of a meeting of MAFAC's CBP Task Force. The MAFAC was established by the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary) and, since 1971, advises the Secretary on all living marine resource matters that are the responsibility of the Department of Commerce. The MAFAC charter and meeting information are located online at <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/partners#marine-fisheries-advisory-committee>. The CBP Task Force reports to MAFAC and is being convened to develop recommendations for long-term goals to meet Columbia Basin salmon recovery, conservation needs, and harvest opportunities, in the context of habitat capacity and other factors that affect salmon mortality. More information is available at the CBP Task Force web page: [http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/columbia\\_river/index.html](http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/columbia_river/index.html).

### Matters To Be Considered

The meeting time and agenda are subject to change. Meeting topics include beginning phase II work to explore options and strategies for achieving the provisional quantitative goals and the qualitative goals recommended through the phase I work.

### Special Accommodations

The meeting is physically accessible to people with disabilities. Requests for sign language interpretation or other auxiliary aids should be directed to Katherine Cheney, 503-231-6730, by April 17, 2019.

Dated: April 9, 2019.

**Jennifer L. Lukens,**

*Federal Program Officer, Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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