

August 23, 2004

TO: Interested Parties, Practitioners, Local Governments, Industry Associates
FROM: NOAA Fisheries, Northwest Region
RE: Extended Comment Period and Community Meetings on NOAA Fisheries' Proposals for Endangered Species Act Listing Determinations and Hatchery Listing Policy for West Coast Salmon and Steelhead

Community meetings will be held in the Pacific Northwest from mid-September to mid-October regarding NOAA Fisheries' recent proposed hatchery listing policy and listing determinations for West Coast salmon and steelhead. Opportunities for public comment and discussion on both these proposals will be integrated into the public meetings described below.

NOAA Fisheries believes that these two proposals are intimately related and important to salmon recovery. Combining opportunities for public engagement on these issues into the same community meetings is an efficient use of the agency's and the public's time and resources. Afternoon sessions will be provided for local practitioners and stakeholder parties involved with managing the Endangered Species Act on a regular basis. Evening "open house" sessions designed for broader public participation will also be conducted on the same day as the afternoon sessions. These practitioner and open-house meetings will be held:

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| • Sept. 14 | Wenatchee WA | Chelan County PUD Auditorium |
| • Sept. 16 | Kennewick, WA | Red Lion Hotel |
| • Sept. 22 | Newport, OR | Shilo Inn |
| • Sept. 28 | Salmon, ID | Stagecoach Inn |
| • Sept. 30 | Lewiston ID | Red Lion Hotel |
| • October 5 | Seattle WA | Radisson Hotel (SeaTac) |
| • October 7 | Roseburg, OR | Umpqua Community College |
| • October 13 | Portland, OR | Portland Building |

(Dates and locations of public hearings to be held in California will be announced separately.)

Background

In June, 2004, NOAA Fisheries published two proposals (for its hatchery listing policy and listing determinations) and announced comment periods for public response to these proposals. Comment periods for these proposals will be extended to October 20, 2004. (Please visit <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov> for more information and details).

NOAA Fisheries is conducting these practitioner and open-house public meetings as part of its commitment to provide ample opportunities to receive public input, as well as to provide a formal comment process. NOAA Fisheries' staff will be attending and participating in these meetings. Additionally, staff will be accepting oral and written public comments on the proposals during the evening open-house meetings. A description of the format and purpose for these meetings follows:

Evening Open House and Public Testimony

Evening sessions will be designed in an "open house" format and will provide the general public with an opportunity to meet with NOAA Fisheries staff in small groups on specific topics in order to learn more about the proposals and their possible impacts on their communities. These evening meetings will also provide opportunities for the public to make formal recorded comments on the proposals. The preferred means of providing public comment for the official record is via written testimony prepared in advance. Nonetheless, blank "comment sheets" will be provided at the evening meetings for those without prepared written comments, and facilities will also be provided for recording verbal testimony.

The evening sessions will be open from 6:30 P.M to 9:30 P.M. Because these sessions will be designed as open houses where the public can move from "station" to "station" and discuss their particular interests with NOAA Fisheries staff, members of the local community can come and go from the meeting as they please. For those who are interested, there will also be a short presentation on these proposals from NOAA Fisheries beginning at 6:30 p.m. NOAA Fisheries hopes this format will allow busy community members to participate without necessarily attending the entire evening.

Afternoon Practitioner Meetings

In each community, NOAA Fisheries will also provide additional opportunities for input from practitioners and affected stakeholders who work with the Endangered Species Act on a regular basis. NOAA Fisheries believes this is another important element in effective and responsive rule-making. Consequently, NOAA Fisheries will conduct an afternoon session (1:30 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.) in each community. The agenda and structure of these afternoon meetings will allow practitioners to discuss the subject proposals with NOAA Fisheries staff in small groups.

Attendance of the afternoon sessions will be on a pre-registration basis, and designed with the following practitioner and stakeholder participants in mind: tribal governments; forestry and agricultural interests; home builders and developers; the sport and commercial fishing community; the environmental community; the business community; utility and special districts; local government elected officials and their staff; other locally-based Federal and state agencies; and public interest groups.

How to Attend

Members of the public wishing to attend the evening open-house meetings will receive the notification through advertising, NOAA Fisheries Northwest Region's web page

(<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov>), and information published in their community. There is no need to register; just drop in anytime during the course of the evening event.

To register for the *afternoon* meeting, please **send an e-mail to James Rapp at jquincev@earthlink.net**. If you do not have email access, you may send Mr. Rapp a note at 5845 NE 29th Avenue, Portland, OR 97211. **VERY IMPORTANT:** Please title your email or the envelope of your mailed note: “NOAA Workshop Registration.” Please include the following:

- Name
- Title and Affiliation
- Email address (or mailing address)
- Which location you plan to attend (e.g.: Wenatchee, Roseburg, etc.)
- Which of the 2 proposals you wish to discuss

Attendees will be informed by return e-mail (or letter) of the specific location and time of each session. Attendance at the afternoon session may be limited, so please register as soon as possible.

Additional Opportunity to Comment

In scheduling these community meetings, NOAA Fisheries has anticipated that many affected stakeholders and members of the public may prefer to discuss these proposals directly with staff during the public comment period. However, these public meetings are *not* the only opportunity for the public to provide input on these proposals. The public and stakeholders are encouraged to continue to comment and provide input to NOAA Fisheries on the proposals (via correspondence, e-mail, and the Internet) up until the scheduled close of the comment period on October 20, 2004.

For further information, or to obtain background materials including the relevant Federal Register notices, please visit www.nwr.noaa.gov, or contact Rosemary Furfey, NOAA Fisheries, at (503) 231-2149.