

First Annual Evaluation Report

**1995 Executive Order
for
Recreational Fisheries
(No. 12962)**

To the National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council

By: The Sport Fishing and
Boating Partnership Council
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Doug Alcorn, Coordinator
1033 N. Fairfax Street, Suite 200
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 836-1392

I. Introduction:

The President's June 7, 1995, Executive Order for Recreational Fisheries¹ set in motion a series of actions by federal departments, agencies, and non-federal recreational fisheries constituents. Executive Order (EO) 12962 requires federal departments to work together to develop and implement a 5-year plan intended to conserve and enhance this Nation's recreational fishery resources and fishing opportunities. The EO also requires issuance of a policy for improving administration of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as it relates to recreational fisheries. All federal agencies are to aggressively work to promote compatibility and reduce conflict between administration of the Endangered Species Act and recreational fisheries.

The President established the National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council representing six executive departments and the Environmental Protection Agency. This Coordination Council, co-chaired by the Departments of the Interior and Commerce, is to ensure that the 5-year plan is developed and carried out. In his EO, the President also called on the federally-chartered Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC) to monitor the status of America's recreational fishery resources and annually evaluate federal activities and policies intended to enhance recreational fishing opportunities. On June 21, 1996, the SFBPC sent a letter to each department and agency represented on the Coordination Council, asking for brief descriptions of how these agencies are implementing the President's Order. This report is a synopsis of the responses received describing activities and products attributable to EO 12962 in the 12 months since its inception.

II. First Year Activities/Products:

Endangered Species Act Policy:

The President called for a joint policy between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for changing the way the ESA is administered. The policy is to result in more consistent application and administration of the ESA between and within agencies and to reduce conflict between listed species recovery and traditional management of recreational fishery resources. The policy was to be effective by December, 1995, six months after the EO. In early December, the Service and the NMFS published the policy in draft, for public/agency

review and comment. The agencies considered all comments before finalizing the policy in June, 1996².

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service are to aggressively promote compatibility and reduce conflict between administration of the Endangered Species Act and recreational fisheries.

The SFBPC helped these two agencies develop this policy by convening state, industry, conservation groups, and other federal agency representatives in 1994 and 1995 to find common ground on this issue. The SFBPC's report of findings, principles, and recommended actions served as the foundation for this joint policy.

How has this enhanced recreational fisheries?

In July, 1995, the Service published its finding that stocking rainbow trout into Lakes Mead and Mohave, accompanied with habitat enhancement programs proposed by the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the endangered razorback sucker and bonytail chub. The Service further concluded that the "level of anticipated take is not likely to result in jeopardy to the species or destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat." These findings came after negotiations between the NDOW and the Service to minimize impacts of this stocking program by adhering to stocking protocols designed to protect the listed species. These win/win negotiations are supported by the two federal agencies and will continue to be developed where possible.

National Recreational Fisheries Conservation Plan:

Agency staff of the National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council began work on the 5-year National Recreational Fisheries Conservation Plan even before Departmental representatives were appointed to the Council. Numerous meetings were conducted from late summer 1995, through spring, 1996, to develop and refine the goal statement, implementation strategies, success indicators, and agency outputs. Underlying principles for this effort included:

- *The conservation plan is to serve as an umbrella, broad-scoped plan which lays out how Departments will measure and document efforts to enhance recreational fisheries.*
- *Agencies will be required to develop their own action plans for contributing the overall goal.*
- *Outputs are agency-specific and quantifiable.*
- *Additional data collection requirements for agencies are not practical, given current federal budget constraints, therefore existing and regularly compiled data*

are to be used for measuring success.

Formal consultation began when staff for the Coordination Council convened in a facilitated discussion with staff for the SFBPC in January, 1996. The purposes of the meeting were to reach consensus on desirable and measurable outcomes, and to develop strategies to accomplish these outcomes. Discussants agreed that no single agency would be able to accomplish all of the implementation strategies, and that outputs must complement other agency efforts to achieve the overall goal. Staff for both councils closely coordinated their efforts from the outset of this exercise by providing comments on this plan through various stages of development.

The Coordination Council convened for the first time in January, and again in February, 1996, to finalize the draft plan before meeting with the SFBPC. Both Councils convened in March to provide final direction to staff for completing the document. The Conservation Plan³ was published and distributed publicly in June, 1996.

Federal agencies impacted by Executive Order 12962 must work together to develop and implement a 5-year nationally comprehensive conservation plan for recreational fisheries.

How has this enhanced recreational fisheries?

Seventeen federal agencies or Departmental Offices are responsible for achieving portions of the Conservation Plan. Operational changes resulting from the President's Executive Order and for accomplishing the Conservation Plan are beginning to occur (Table 1). These changes will make agencies more responsive to Executive Order 12962 and ultimately result in enhanced fishing opportunities and resource conservation.

III. Future Outlook:

The SFBPC is pleased to report these findings as evidence that federal departments and agencies support fishery resource stewardship and are determined to enhance recreational fishing. It is still too early to tell if Executive Order 12962, the Conservation Plan, and the ESA Policy will positively impact the Nation's recreational fisheries beyond the first-year stir of activities. Agencies are developing plans and restructuring to pay heed to recreational fisheries interests. The key to implementing the Executive Order is accountability. Department heads and agency directors are holding their managers accountable for implementing their respective strategic plans.

The SFBPC will continue to gather input annually from agency reports and from recreational fisheries constituents to determine if recreational fishery resources are better now than before 1995. The monumental task of enhancing recreational fisheries does not lie solely with the federal agencies. It is the responsibility of all stakeholders -- industry, anglers, agencies, and all others. The SFBPC looks forward to a constructive partnership in which all partners contribute.

Citations:

1. Executive Order 12962 of June 7, 1995. Title: Recreational Fisheries. Federal Register, Vol. 60, No. 111, Friday, June 9, 1995.

2. Policy for Conserving Species Listed or Proposed for Listing Under the Endangered Species Act While Providing and Enhancing Recreational Fisheries Opportunities. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service. June, 1996.

3. Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan. United States Departments of the Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, Energy, Transportation, Defense, and the Environmental Protection Agency. June, 1996.

Table 1: Activities by Federal Departments and Agencies for Implementing Executive Order 12962 for Recreational Fisheries.

Department/Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Dept. of Interior) (Co-chair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint lead with NMFS in coordinating development of Conservation Plan. • Completed joint policy for ESA/Rec. Fisheries with NMFS. • Directed Assistant Director for Fisheries to complete strategic plan. • Directed all Regional and Asst. Directors to implement the Conservation Plan and ESA Policy. • Directed all Regional Directors to convene at least one stakeholder meeting by end of Oct, 1996. • Coordinated appointments to National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council. • Opened 14 National Wildlife Refuges to recreational fishing since EO 12962 was signed. • Provided 5,311,928 angler days on Service Lands in FY1995, anticipate increase in FY1996.
National Marine Fisheries Service (Dept. of Commerce) (Co-chair)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint lead with FWS in coordinating development of Conservation Plan. • Completed joint policy for ESA/Rec.

	<p>Fisheries with FWS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directive to all Regional, Science, and Office Directors to help develop strategic plan. • Office of Intergovernmental and Recreational Fisheries Affairs established and now recruiting staff. • Coordinated appointments to National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council. • Transferred 95 metric tons of bluefin tuna from reserve to the "angling" category to enhance fishing opportunities in 1996. • Coordinated with Atlantic States Marine Fish. Comm. to expand striped bass stocks via harvest mgt. • Set up an internet home page to provide access to the Marine Recreational Fishery Statistics Survey data bases. It also contains EO12962 and other useful information for recreational fishing.
<p>U.S. Bureau of Land Mgt (Dept. of Interior)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed EO12962 to all State Directors. • Instructed State Directors to consider fishing a high priority for restoring habitat and developing recreational access on public lands. • Established team to develop strategic plan. • Providing public fishing information via the internet. • Providing line item funding for fishing projects to State Directors for projects to be implemented in FY1996.
<p>National Park Service (Dept. of Interior)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed EO12962 to all field offices to integrate into planing and operations. • Included provisions of EO12962 into the Coop. Fishery Mgt. Plan for Glen Canyon Nat. Rec. Area. • Initiated fishery mgt. planning for St Croix Nat. Scenic Riverway w/ Minnesota and Wisconsin.
<p>U.S.D.A. Forest Service (Dept. of Agriculture)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed EO12962 and Conservation Plan to all field offices.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required documentation of effects of land mgt actions on the health of aquatic systems, rec. fisheries, and associated social and economic value. • Required identification of rec. fishing opportunities on National Forest System lands. • Established National Rec. Fisheries Program Leader to participate in developing Conservation Plan and to coordinate development of Forest Service implementation schedule for EO12962. • Identified positions necessary for a strong rec. fisheries program, intend to fill positions. • High priority for recreational fisheries in Forest Service activities.
U.S.D.A. Natural Res. Cons. Service (Dept. of Agriculture)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing strategic plan to implement EO12962.
Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Dept. of Defense)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed EO 12962 to Deputy Assistant Secretaries of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Defense Logistics agency for assistance in developing the Conservation Plan. • Developed a draft strategic plan for DOD, currently under review by military departments.
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Dept. of Defense)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convened task force of field reps and headquarters staff to draft strategic plan. • Compiling agency output information for 1996/97 activity report.
U.S. Coast Guard (Dept. of Transportation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will, by August '96, send out the Conservation Plan with supporting correspondence to USCG District Law Enforcement Representatives to ensure it is implemented.
Bonneville Power Admin. (Dept. of Energy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed Conservation Plan to appropriate DOE field offices and coordinating

	<p>development of Department of Energy strategic plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiling a list of DOE sites with rec fisheries opportunities and conducting a data sort of BPA-funded projects and related activities for developing strategic plan.
Tennessee Valley Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed Conservation Plan to business units in TVA accountable for the various output measures • Directive to business units to contribute to the strategic plan.
U.S. Dept. of Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convened reps from Coast Guard, FAA, Federal Highways Admin to develop DOT strategic plan
U.S. Env. Protection Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directed Assistant Administrators to implement Conservation Plan. • Personal accountability of Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds to complete strategic plan. • Identified office and regional contacts with responsibilities for implementing the Conservation Plan.
U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (Dept. of Interior)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed Conservation Plan Area Offices and tribes. • Established a Tribal Recreational Fisheries Task Force comprised of 20 tribes and the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society. • Developed a draft agency step down plan for review and comment by Area Offices and the Tribal Recreational Fisheries Task Force.
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Dept. of Interior)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing agency specific activity plan.
U.S. Nat'l Biological Service (Dept. of Interior)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directive sent to Assistant, Regional, and Center Directors to identify research needs for implementing the Conservation Plan. • Improving access to existing information and

	technical assistance for recreational fisheries.
U.S. Fed. Energy Reg. Comm. (Dept. of Energy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distributed Conservation Plan and EO12962 to Division Directors and Licensing Office -- instructed to consider goals and strategies therein in actions involving licensing, relicensing, and amendments to hydro projects.• Public access and recreational activities are considered beneficial uses in all licensing processes, as required by the Federal Power Act and by the Federal Power Commission's general policy.• Issued document titled "Recreational Development at Licensed Hydropower Projects" to explain the Commission's recreational policy.• Issued booklet titled "Recreational Opportunities at Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Licensed Hydropower Projects" to increase public awareness of opportunities at FERC licensed projects.