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Draft Environmental Impact Statement to Inform Columbia River Basin Hatchery Operations & the Funding of Mitchell Act Hatchery Programs

(AKA: The Mitchell Act EIS)

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Purpose of the EIS

Develop a NMFS policy direction that will

1. Guide NMFS's distribution of Mitchell Act hatchery funds
2. Inform NMFS's future review of individual Columbia River basin hatchery programs under the Endangered Species Act



The EIS Will Not . . .

- Determine whether any particular hatchery program is compliant with the ESA. Those decisions come later under provisions of the ESA.



The EIS Will Not . . .

- Specify or make determinations on how individual programs should be operated.

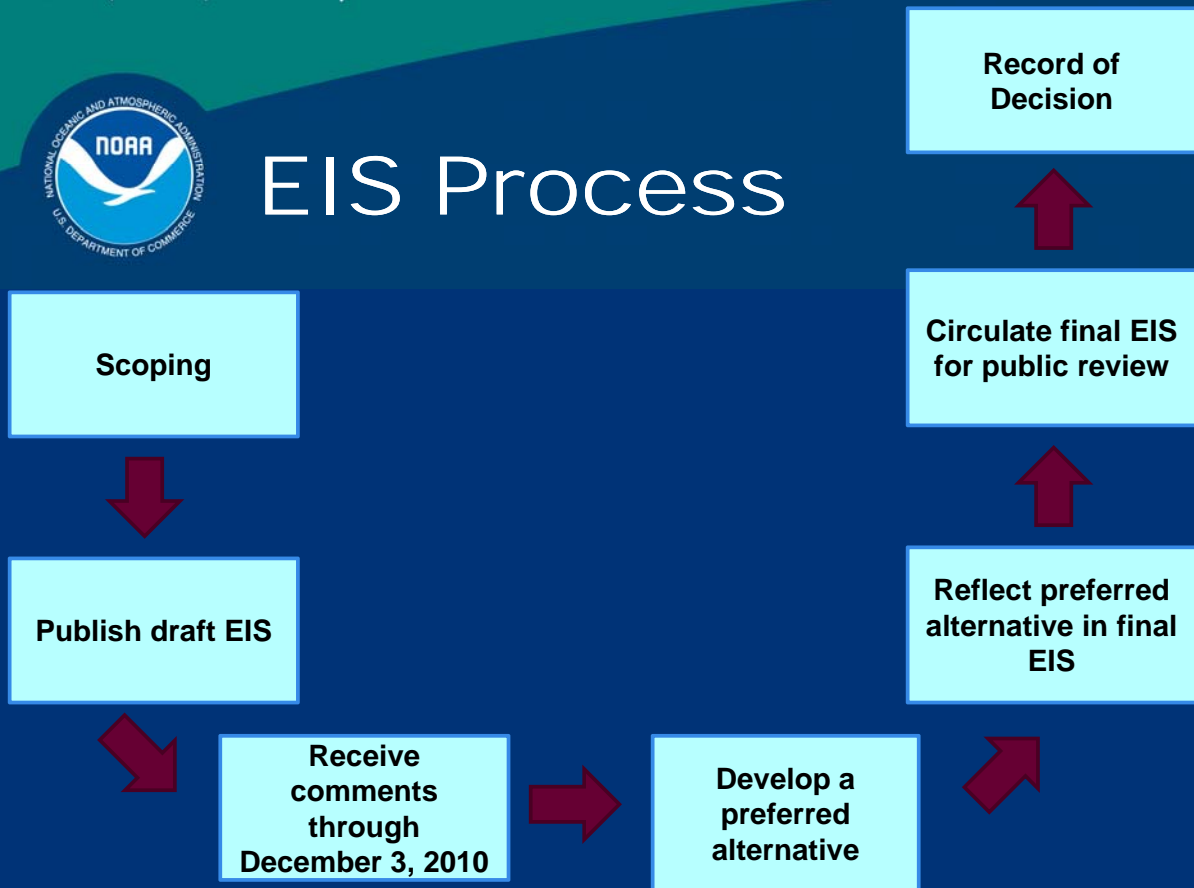


The EIS Will Not . . .

- Determine the maximum acceptable amount of production in the basin.



EIS Process





Columbia River Basin

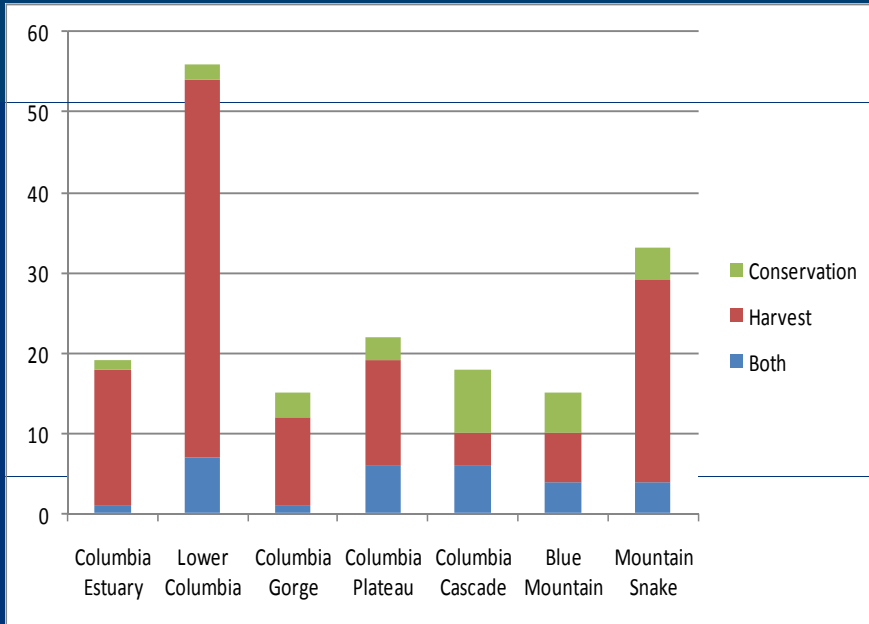
- 178 hatchery programs in Columbia River basin
- 80 hatchery facilities in Columbia River basin
- Annual hatchery production of around 144 million juvenile salmon and steelhead



Columbia River Basin

According to the hatchery operators:

- 69 percent of the programs are operated for harvest augmentation
- 15 percent are operated for conservation
- 16 percent are operated for both conservation and harvest augmentation



Hatcheries and Facilities in the Columbia and Snake River Basins

Prepared by Parametrix, Inc. January 19, 2010 (DEIS_Figure_1-3_20100119.mxd)

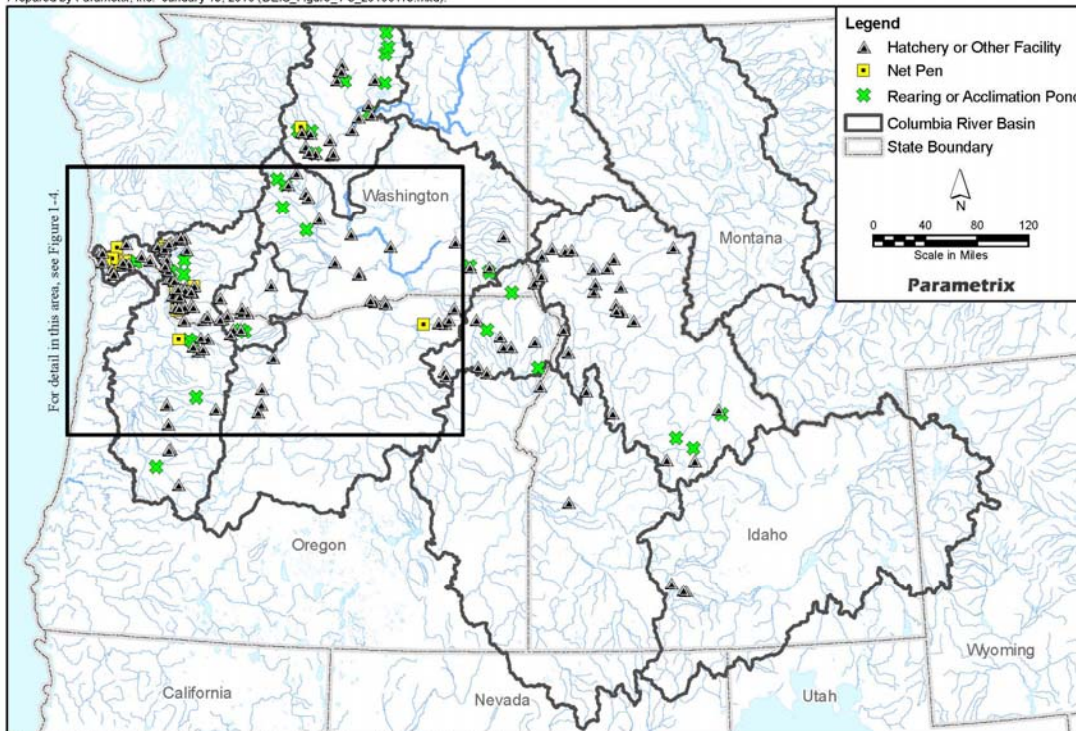


Figure 1-3. Hatcheries and facilities in the Columbia and Snake River basins.



Mitchell Act

- Administered by NMFS
- In past ten years, \$11-16 million disbursed annually for Mitchell Act hatchery operations



Mitchell Act

- 62 programs funded under the Mitchell Act
- Mitchell Act-funded hatchery programs produce over 71 million fish annually (49% of the total production in Columbia River basin)

Hatcheries Currently Receiving Mitchell Act Funding

Prepared by Parametrix, Inc. January 19, 2010 (DEIS_Figure_1-2_20100119.mxd)

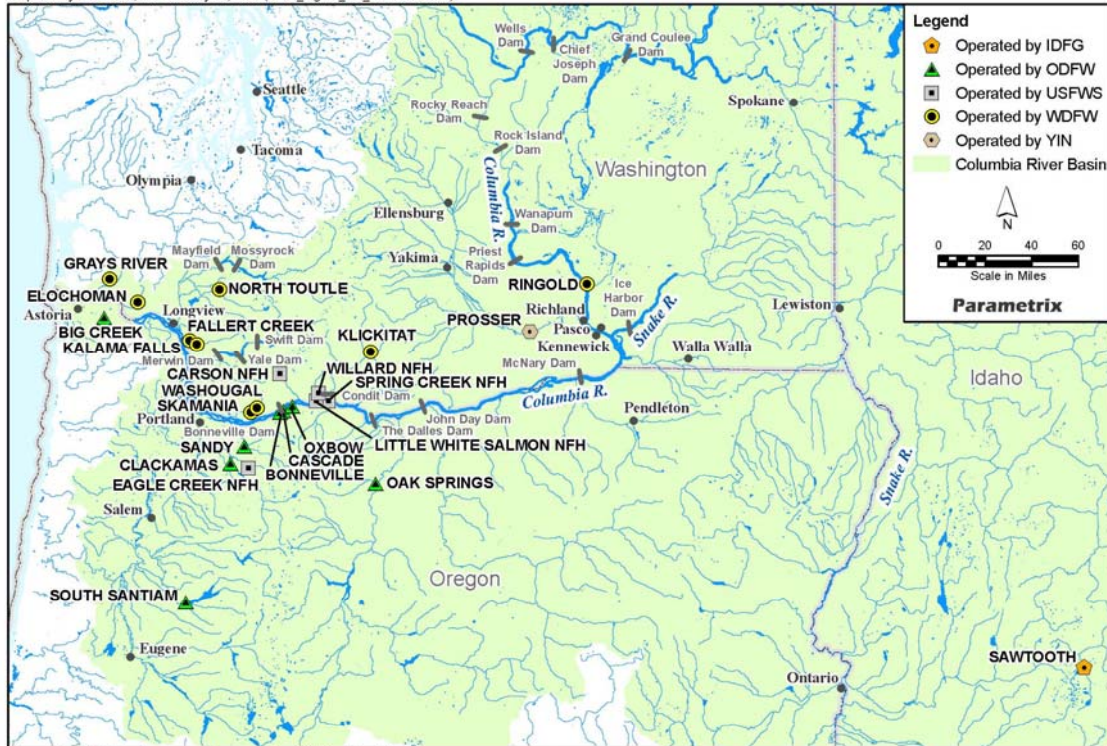


Figure 1-2. Hatcheries currently receiving Mitchell Act funding.

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Structure of EIS

- 5 alternatives including status quo
- Each alternative centers around a general policy direction



Structure of EIS

- NMFS developed one hypothetical implementation scenario for each alternative. Innumerable other scenarios exist.
- NMFS is not advocating any of the alternatives or hypothetical implementation scenarios – they were developed based on suggestions received during scoping.



Structure of EIS

- No preferred alternative in draft EIS.
- NMFS will identify a preferred alternative in the final EIS.
- NMFS will not identify a preferred implementation scenario.



Alternative 1

- No-Action (status quo)



Alternative 2

- Mitchell Act funding eliminated, and Mitchell Act-funded hatchery programs closed.
- Intermediate performance goals would be applied to non-Mitchell Act-funded hatchery programs affecting primary or contributing salmon and steelhead populations.



Alternative 2

- BMPs would be applied to all hatchery programs
- Monitoring, evaluation, and reform would be guided by a comprehensive basin-wide plan.



Alternative 3

- Intermediate performance goals would be applied to all hatchery programs affecting primary or contributing populations.
- Hatchery programs would strive to meet current harvest objectives.



Alternative 3

- BMPs would be applied to all hatchery programs.
- Monitoring, evaluation, and reform would be guided by a comprehensive basin-wide plan.
- New temporary (i.e., seasonal) weirs would be installed to control the number of hatchery-origin fish on the spawning grounds.



Alternative 4

- New conservation hatchery programs would be initiated in the Willamette/Lower Columbia River basin.
- New harvest hatchery programs would be initiated and/or existing hatchery programs would be changed to better support harvest opportunities below Bonneville Dam, including ocean fisheries.



Alternative 4

- Stronger Intermediate performance goals would be applied to hatchery programs affecting primary and contributing populations in the Willamette/Lower Columbia River basin.
- Intermediate performance goals would be applied to hatchery programs affecting primary and contributing populations in the Interior Columbia River basin.



Alternative 4

- New temporary (i.e., seasonal) and permanent weirs would be installed to control the number of hatchery-origin fish on the spawning grounds.
- BMPs would be applied to all hatchery programs.
- Monitoring, evaluation, and reform would be guided by a comprehensive basin-wide plan.



Alternative 5

- New conservation hatchery programs would be initiated in the Interior Columbia River basin.
- New harvest hatchery programs would be initiated and/or existing hatchery programs would be changed to better support harvest opportunities above Bonneville Dam.



Alternative 5

- Stronger Intermediate performance goals would be applied to hatchery programs affecting primary and contributing populations in the Interior Columbia River basin.
- Intermediate performance goals would be applied to hatchery programs affecting primary and contributing populations in the Willamette/Lower Columbia River basin.



Alternative 5

- New temporary (i.e., seasonal) and permanent weirs would be installed to control the number of hatchery-origin fish on the spawning grounds.
- BMPs would be applied to all hatchery programs.
- Monitoring, evaluation, and reform would be guided by a comprehensive basin-wide plan.



Schedule

- Draft EIS released on August 6, 2010
- Public Review Period is 120-days and will end December 3, 2010
- Final EIS: Spring of 2011

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Public Hearings

- September 20, 2010; Vancouver, WA
- September 24, 2010; Kennewick, WA
- September 30, 2010; Astoria, OR
- October 13, 2010; Lewiston, ID
- TBD; Boise, ID (likely October 26 or 27)

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Hatcheries/MA-EIS.cfm](http://WWW.NWR.NOAA.GOV/Salmon-Harvest-Hatcheries/Hatcheries/MA-EIS.cfm)



EIS Process

