



MMHSRP PEIS Public Hearing Agenda

2:00 – 3:00: Poster Session, Informal Q&A

3:00 – 4:00: Formal Presentation

4:00 – 5:00: Formal Oral Comment Period
Informal Q&A to follow



Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) on the Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMHSRP)

Public Hearing
Seattle, WA
April 3, 2007

Welcome & Introduction





Purpose of this Meeting

- Present an overview of the information contained in the Draft PEIS.
- Provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft PEIS.
- Discuss the next steps in revising and finalizing the PEIS.



Public Hearing Locations

- April 2, 2007- **San Francisco, CA**
- April 3, 2007- **Seattle, WA**
- April 6, 2007- **Silver Spring, MD**
- April 9, 2007- **Boston, MA**
- April 10, 2007- **St. Petersburg, FL**



Welcome & Introduction

1. Please Sign In at the Registration Table to Present Oral Comments



2. Written Comments May Be Turned In Today



3. Transcripts of Today's Meeting Are Being Captured by a Court Reporter





The National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) Process

Ms. Sarah Howlett
MMHSRP



Requirements of NEPA

- Analysis of potential environmental impacts of a proposed Federal agency action.
 - **Consider environmental consequences during decision-making to reduce, prevent, or eliminate environmental damage.**
 - **Provide for public involvement in key phases of the EIS process.**

NEPA DOES NOT: Dictate the decision to be made by NMFS.



Why a PEIS?

- NOAA policy to prepare a PEIS for agency actions that:
 - **are the subject of significant public controversy based on potential environmental consequences**
 - **have uncertain environmental impacts or risks**
 - **establish a precedent or decision in principle about future proposals**
 - **may result in cumulatively significant impacts**
 - **may have adverse effects upon endangered or threatened species or their habitats**



NEPA EIS Process Flow Chart





Next Steps

- Public comments on the Draft PEIS due **April 30, 2007.**
- NMFS - review and merge comments.
- Respond to comments and finalize PEIS.
- Issue Final PEIS for 30-day public review- **May-June 2007.**
- Publish the ROD- **June 2007.**



EIS Overview

- Section 1: Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action
- Section 2: Alternatives
- Section 3: Affected Environment
- Section 4: Environmental Consequences (Impacts)
- Section 5: Mitigation
- Section 6: Cumulative Impacts



Proposed Actions and Preferred Alternatives

Ms. Sarah Wilkin
MMHSRP



Proposed Action

- **Issuance of Policies and Best Practices for Marine Mammal Stranding Response, Rehabilitation, and Release**
- **Issuance of MMHSRP ESA/MMPA Permit**
- **Stranding Agreements issued or renewed on case-by-case basis**
- **Other day-to-day operations would continue (response, rehabilitation, release determinations, etc.)**



Photo by NMFS NWR



Stranding Agreements and Response

- Preferred Alternative: A4
 - New Stranding Agreement template would be utilized for next renewal/issuance.
 - Final Stranding Agreement Evaluation Criteria would be implemented for next renewal/issuance
 - Current activities of the Stranding Network would continue, with ability to add new (adaptive) activities if necessary.

Carcass Disposal



- Preferred Alternative: B3
 - Recommendation to transport chemically euthanized carcasses off-site for disposal by incineration, landfill, or other methods (such as composting).
 - Animals that die naturally or euthanized by other means may be disposed off by whatever means feasible and allowed.



Rehabilitation Activities

- Preferred Alternative: C3
 - Current rehabilitation activities would continue, with ability to designate new facilities and modify rehab activities, as necessary.
 - Final Rehabilitation Facility Standards would be implemented and enforced to the minimum standard via an inspection program (phase-in over 3 yrs)

Release of Rehabilitated Animals

- Preferred Alternative: D3
 - Current release activities would continue, with the ability to modify release activities, as necessary.
 - Final Release Criteria would be implemented (effective immediately)





Disentanglement

- Preferred Alternative: E3
 - Current activities of the Disentanglement Network continue, with the ability to add new participants and modify activities and/or technologies, as necessary.
 - Disentanglement of small cetaceans and pinnipeds would continue under new Stranding Agreements.
 - New ESA/MMPA permit would authorize current and future disentanglement activities for ESA-listed species.

Disentanglement

- Preferred Alternative: E3 (continued)
 - East Coast Network would continue current activities.
 - Modification to West Coast Network would occur to coordinate structure and training (immediate).
 - Disentanglement Guidelines and training prerequisites (“Criteria for Disentanglement Roles and Training Levels”) would be implemented nationwide (phased-in).



Photo by PCCS



Biomonitoring and Research

- Preferred Alternative: F3
 - NMFS PR1 would issue the MMHSRP a new ESA/MMPA permit that would include current and future biomonitoring and research activities.
 - Note: If a new permit cannot be issued prior to the expiration of the current permit (June 30, 2007), the current permit may be amended and extended.



Mitigation

- Purpose: avoid, minimize or eliminate negative impacts from proposed actions
- Measures developed for each alternative where a significant impact would likely occur
 - In sensitive or protected habitats, coordinate with responsible authorities
 - Qualified personnel for capture and restraint (experienced veterinarians where possible)
 - Use of standards and protocols



Oral Comments

Oral Comment
Time



Oral Comments

- Please sign in at the registration table
- If there are multiple comments, a 4 minute time limit to offer your oral comments may be necessary
- This meeting is being recorded by a court reporter to ensure an accurate and complete record of your comments





Written Comments



Your Options Are:

1. Hand in prepared written comments today;
2. Use written comment sheets provided and turn them in today, and/or
3. Submit written comments via mail or email by April 30, 2007, to:

**David Cottingham; Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Division;
Office of Protected Resources, NMFS; 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13635
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3226
Email: mmhsrpeis.comments@noaa.gov
Fax: 301-427-2584**



Written and Verbal Comments

- Bring specific concerns forward regarding content of the Draft PEIS.
- Suggest specific changes to alternatives and environmental consequences that NMFS should consider.



Additional Information

1. Information available for review at public libraries.
2. Available on NMFS web page.
3. To receive a copy of the Final PEIS, please register here and/or check availability on the website:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/eis.htm>



**Thank you for
your participation!**
