

Key Points of the Habitat Expansion Agreement

- The Habitat Expansion Agreement for Central Valley Spring-Run Chinook Salmon and Central Valley Steelhead (HEA) was negotiated as an alternative to Federal Power Act fish passage prescriptions as part of FERC relicensing of Oroville, Poe, and Upper North Fork Feather River hydropower projects on the Feather River.
- There are nine signatories (Parties) to the HEA: DWR and PG&E (Licensees), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Forest Service, American Rivers, Art Baggett, Jr. (signing as a recommendation to the State Water Resources Control Board), and the State Water Contractors.
- The overall goal of the HEA is to expand the amount of habitat with the physical characteristics necessary to support spawning, rearing, and adult holding of spring-run Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Sacramento River Basin.
- The specific Habitat Expansion Threshold is to expand spawning, rearing and adult holding habitat sufficiently to accommodate an estimated net increase of 2,000 to 3,000 spring-run Chinook salmon for spawning in the Sacramento River Basin. The Habitat Expansion Threshold is focused on spring-run as the priority species, as expansion of the habitat for spring-run typically accommodates steelhead as well.
- The HEA states that habitat expansion actions may include (Section 3.1), among other things, the following types of actions:
 - Dam removals or re-operation of dams to benefit fish;
 - Creation or enhancement of fish ladders or other fishways;
 - In-stream water temperature or flow improvements;
 - Other physical habitat enhancements.
 - Examples of physical habitat enhancements include spawning gravel augmentation, addition of large woody debris for juvenile rearing, riparian zone restoration or other improvements that assist in the recovery of spring-run Chinook salmon and steelhead populations.

Provided that:

- The actions target spring-run Chinook salmon habitat.
- The actions are located within the Sacramento River Basin.
- The actions contribute to the Habitat Expansion Threshold.

Additionally, any action that is not already fully funded through another source is eligible for consideration provided that it is not required to be carried out as part of an existing commitment, legal obligation or FERC relicensing process (Section 3.2)

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- A public website with information on the HEA has been established (www.sac-basin-hea.com). The complete HEA and lists of the Evaluation Criteria, Selection Criteria, and NMFS Approval Criteria are also available on the website.
- The HEA includes 17 non-prioritized Evaluation Criteria (Section 4.1.1), which the Licensees are to use to screen potential habitat expansion actions and develop a preliminary list of viable actions.
- The HEA also includes four Selection Criteria (Section 4.1.2), which the Licensees are to use in selecting recommended habitat expansion actions from the list of viable actions. The recommended habitat expansion actions will be included in the Draft Habitat Expansion Plan.
- The HEA identifies six NMFS Approval Criteria (Section 4.2.3), which NMFS will use in deciding whether to approve the Final Habitat Expansion Plan.
- The Effective Date of the HEA is November 20, 2007. The Licensees have until November 20, 2009 to complete identification, evaluation and recommendation of habitat expansion actions, in consultation with the other Parties to the HEA and directly affected stakeholders, and prepare and distribute a Draft Habitat Expansion Plan.
- The Licensees have convened an HEA Steering Committee comprised of representatives of DWR and PG&E to work towards fulfillment of the HEA requirements.
- The HEA Steering Committee members are:
 - Liv Imset, Senior License Coordinator, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, (415) 973-1066, lki1@pge.com
 - Heidi Rooks, Environmental Program Manager, Department of Water Resources, (916) 376-9704, hrooks@water.ca.gov
 - Paul Kubicek, Aquatic Biology Consulting Scientist, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, (925) 415-6361, pfk1@pge.com
 - Chris Wilkinson, Senior Environmental Scientist, Department of Water Resources, (916) 376-9769, cdw@water.ca.gov