



Nor'wester newsletter

Issue #774 August 11, 2021

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Welcome new member WCT Marine & Construction

[WCT Marine & Construction](#) has over 40 years of experience in marine construction, marine outfitting and metal fabrication.

WCT offers mariners a shipyard option dedicated to uncompromising quality, expert craftsmanship and superior customer service in new vessel construction; vessel repair and renovation; marine outfitting; crane, tug and barge service; metal fabrication; project administration; and more.

Office Director Remington Augustine will be WCT's representative to PNWA. Remington can be reached at 503-440-1009 or Remi@wctmarine.com



PNWA joins coalition raising sea otter reintroduction concerns

PNWA joined the West Coast Seafood Processors Association; Columbia River Crab Fishermen's Association; the Ports of Astoria, Chinook, Coos Bay, Ilwaco and Newport; and other organizations to send [a coalition letter to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service](#) raising concerns and seeking additional information on impacts of the potential reintroduction of sea otters on the Pacific Coast.



August 5, 2021

Ms. Martha Williams, Principal Deputy Director
Mr. Stephen Guertin, Deputy Director for Policy and Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C. St., NW
Washington, DC 20249

Via email to: Martha_Williams@fws.gov; Stephen_Guertin@fws.gov

RE: **Issues for Consideration in the USFWS Study on the Feasibility and Cost of Reestablishing Sea Otters on the Pacific Coast of the Contiguous United States**

Dear Ms. Williams and Mr. Guertin:

The undersigned ocean-based industry stakeholders appreciate the opportunity to submit the following comments and recommendations to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for consideration in the study on the feasibility and cost of reestablishing sea otters on the Pacific Coast of the contiguous United States.

President Trump signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 ([Pub. L. 116-260](#)) into law on December 27, 2020. This Act includes a provision instructing the Agency to conduct the following one-year study and report to Congress:

Sea Otters. – The Committee recognizes that sea otters play a critical ecological role in the marine environment as a keystone species that significantly affects the structure and function of the surrounding ecosystem. However, sea otters were effectively eliminated from the Pacific Coast of the United States by hunters and traders during the 1700s and 1800s. The Committee directs the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to study the feasibility and cost of reestablishing sea otters on the Pacific Coast of the contiguous United States, and to report to Congress on the results of such a study within one year of passage of this bill.

USFWS Comments – Sea Otter Reintroduction

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In the FY2021 appropriations bill, USFWS was directed to complete a feasibility study on this potential action.

To continue to track the sea otter study, click [here](#). For more information contact [Lori Steele](#) at the WCSPA.

CBD claims MARAD's Marine Highway Program violates ESA

The Center for Biological Diversity sent [a letter to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration](#) and others in the Administration indicating the organization's belief the [Marine Highway Program](#) violates the Endangered Species Act. The letter qualifies as Notice of Intent to sue under the ESA.



CBD alleges MARAD failed to ensure the Marine Highways Program did not impact listed species, which include salmon and steelhead in the Columbia and Snake rivers. To potentially avoid litigation, CBD is requesting MARAD conduct ESA Section 7 programmatic and project specific consultations for the Marine Highways Program to determine the impacts, particularly from wake stranding, on listed species.

The CBD letter notes concerns over wake stranding, fuel and chemical spills, fuel consumption increasing greenhouse gases, transportation of fossil fuels contributing to climate change, potential vessel strikes with listed species at the mouth of the Columbia River, and took issue with grants provided to the Port of Morrow for barge service expansion.

Reminder: RSVP for WOTUS rulemaking meetings

We would like to remind our members and partners that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have scheduled initial public meetings to hear from interested stakeholders on their perspectives on defining

"waters of the United States" and how to implement that definition.

The first two meetings (August 18 and 23) are already at or near capacity; if you are interested in weighing in on this process, we encourage you to RSVP for one of the remaining meetings soon.

The meeting schedule and registration, as well as details of the proposed rulemaking, [are available here](#).

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