



Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership Charter



Updates Approved October 1, 2020 by the
Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee

PMEP Charter

I. PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION

The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEP) is a collaboration of agencies and entities working to conserve and restore healthy native fish populations in functional, resilient estuarine and nearshore marine ecosystems in California, Oregon, and Washington.

PMEP is governed by a Steering Committee made up of federal, tribal, and state governments; nonprofit organizations; and industry representatives. The committee promotes, oversees, and facilitates work to accomplish the goals and strategies of PMEP.

II. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE

A. Coordinator

- PMEP is guided by a Coordinator whose work is as set out by the Steering Committee to accomplish the goals, objectives and tasks of the strategic plan and other duties as determined by the Steering Committee.
- Duties: Generally, the Coordinator has day-to-day responsibilities for the organization and its operations. The PMEP Coordinator shall convene and organize regular meetings of the Governance Committee, Steering Committee, and other committees and work groups, attend all meetings, take notes and record official actions, maintain the organization's website, and post work products and decision documents to the PMEP website.

The Coordinator shall be the principal conduit for communicating with the Steering Committee and other committees and assuring committee work is proceeding in a timely fashion towards established goals.

B. Governance Committee

- The PMEP governance committee will be comprised of five members. Members will include the PMEP Chair, Chair-elect, and if possible the Past Chair. Additional members may include the primary federal agency funder, the PMEP fiscal agent, or other appointed active members of the Steering Committee. The term for Governance Committee members will be one year with no limit on the number of terms served. Each year, Steering Committee members will be asked for nominations for individuals to serve.
- Duties: The roles and responsibilities of governance committee members include working closely with the PMEP Coordinator to resolve issues and make decisions regarding day-to-day operations of PMEP, to help set the Steering Committee meeting agendas, and to provide guidance to the Coordinator on ways to resolve issues. All matters of importance will continue to be directed to the PMEP Steering Committee.

C. Steering Committee

- The Steering Committee is comprised of members committed to estuary, nearshore, and fish habitat preservation and restoration along the West Coast.
- Duties: Roles and responsibilities of Steering Committee members:
 - Agree to support and advance the goals and objectives of PMEP as laid out in the strategic framework.
 - Provide strategic advice and vision to PMEP; prioritize and focus PMEP to achieve success.
 - Offer capacity, technical assistance and funding when possible.
 - Provide budget and financial oversight to ensure expenditures and changes are appropriate.
 - Provide guidance and leadership to the PMEP Coordinator. Oversee the work of the PMEP Coordinator.
 - Review and update the strategic plan as needed.
 - Monitor activities and projects initiated as part of the strategic plan.
 - Assist in coordinating and leading efforts that engage partner organization.
- Membership: The size of the PMEP Steering Committee shall not exceed 20 members. PMEP strives for membership that represents the geography and organizational diversity of the West Coast.
 - Members are added to the Steering Committee through the initiation or invitation of the steering committee or by a steering committee member nominating an entity.
 - Seats on the Steering Committee are not held by organizations. Steering Committee members serve as individuals representing their organization or coalitions.
 - When a member leaves the Steering Committee, the Steering Committee evaluates whether a new member from the organization should be invited to replace the departing member.
 - Steering Committee members have a right to a named alternate; the Coordinator must be notified of the alternate in advance of any meeting.
- Nominations: Any Steering Committee member can nominate a new member to the committee. The member must notify the PMEP Coordinator and provide written documentation (from a steering committee member or the nominee) articulating what the member brings to the group and any expectations the nominee has regarding membership. The PMEP Coordinator distributes nominations to steering committee members. Members are provided an appropriate amount of time to review and discuss pending nomination before a decision is made.

- Attendance: Steering Committee members are expected to attend all Steering Committee meetings/conference calls and other activities in which the steering committee convenes; Steering Committee members are expected to actively engage in the partnership. If a Steering Committee member misses three consecutive meetings (Steering Committee conference calls, etc.), the member will be formally approached to discuss interest in future participation.

D. Subcommittees

- The Steering Committee may form subcommittees or work groups as deemed useful to conduct the work of the Committee. These will include a Science and Data Committee and may include a Communications Committee or other subcommittees. Subcommittees may also include people who are not members of the Steering Committee. Subcommittee members are expected to support and advance the goals and objectives of PMEP.
- The Science and Data Subcommittee is a standing subcommittee with the goal of advancing PMEP's work with technical tools and assessments. The subcommittee reviews and evaluates pertinent data and scientific conclusions, then makes recommendations to the Steering Committee to ensure PMEP actions and activities consider the best available information. The Steering Committee will direct the workload of the Science and Data subcommittee. The subcommittee will meet at least quarterly every year. Each year, the Science & Data Committee will name a chair to serve a one-year term. The chair of the subcommittee will attend steering committee meetings and provide progress updates.

E. Partner Organizations

- A partner organization is any organization represented on a PMEP committee or subcommittee.
- Roles and responsibilities of partner organizations include:
 - Agree to support and advance the goals and objectives of PMEP.
 - Be genuinely interested in PMEP and an external advocate for its goals/objectives.
 - Offer capacity, technical assistance and funding when possible.

III. OFFICERS

- Chair and Chair-elect: The PMEP Steering Committee shall elect a Chair-elect among its members at the beginning of the calendar year to serve a one-year term as Chair-elect and a consecutive one-year term as Chair of the committee. Of the Chair and Chair-elect, no more than one can be a federal government/tribal sovereign representative. Nominations for a Chair-elect shall occur at the last Steering committee meeting of the calendar year.

- Duties: The Chair shall provide strategic direction for the organization; coordinate with PMEP Committees, the Coordinator, the fiscal agent, and primary federal funder; and shall be authorized to speak on behalf of the Steering Committee. The Chair-elect shall act in place of the Chair if the latter is unable to perform their duties.
- Past Chair: When able, the immediate Past Chair of the Steering Committee will be invited to serve a minimum of one year on the Governance Committee to assist with leadership transition and to ensure transfer of knowledge among committee officers. This is an optional officer position to be filled according to the Steering Committee's needs and the Past Chair's willingness to serve.

IV. MEETINGS & DOCUMENTING THE WORK OF THE PARTNERSHIP

- Steering Committee and subcommittee meetings are open to the public; however, they are not "public meetings."
- Steering Committee action items and major decisions will be documented in writing on the PMEP website. Other important documents will be posted on the website. The PMEP Coordinator or designee is responsible for recording official actions, taking notes each time the Steering Committee convenes, and posting official documents on the PMEP website.

V. DECISION MAKING

- Steering Committee matters will be discussed with the goal of seeking consensus. For key decision points or if consensus cannot be reached, any member can call for a vote, and that call must be seconded. Discussion will occur, dissenting positions will be documented, and a vote will be taken.
- The Steering Committee must have a quorum (simple majority, i.e., more than half of the total members present) to call for a vote or make a consensus-based decision. A simple majority is required for a vote to pass.
- A Steering Committee member cannot give another member, unless that member is a designated alternate, their vote.
- Meetings can occur in-person or via web conferencing or telephone. Between meetings, the Steering Committee can make decisions via email. If the Coordinator or Chair determine that action is required on an item prior to the next meeting of the Steering Committee, an email ballot will be used to record a vote of the committee. The cover email must clearly explain that their formal written consent is being solicited and that the action will not take effect unless a simple majority approves it.
- Except for email votes called for by the Chair or Coordinator, members must be present at the meeting or on the call /web conference to vote (no written votes can be submitted).

VI. FISCAL MANAGEMEBNT

- Federal funding provided for operational support of PMEP from the US Fish and Wildlife Service through the National Fish Habitat Partnership is managed by the Pacific States Fisheries Management Commission according to applicable federal guidelines.
- Federal funding provided for PMEP restoration and conservation project support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service through the National Fish Habitat Partnership is managed by the regional office of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

VII. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- Members shall avoid conflicts of interest. Any member who has a direct or indirect financial interest in a project or undertaking of PMEP should disclose such potential conflict, and without going through the process for determining whether a conflict of interest actually exists, recuse themselves from involvement in any decision or discussion in which they may have a conflict of interest.
- In cases where a member's agency or organization has applied for funding from PMEP, that member may present the agency's or organization's proposal and may answer questions from the Committee if like opportunities are provided for other applicants for funding. However, the member may not participate in subsequent discussions and shall not vote on such requests.

VIII. AMENDMENTS

- These guidelines may be amended when necessary by two-thirds majority of the Steering Committee. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the PMEP Coordinator to be sent out with a regularly scheduled meeting agenda.