



Strategic Plan 2023-2028



Approved by the PMEP Steering Committee October 4, 2022

Table of Contents

PMEP: A partnership at work	2
Geographic scope.....	2
Assessments and Datasets.....	3
Project support.....	5
PMEP: The next five years	5
Vision and Mission	5
Goals, Strategies, and Objectives.....	5
Goal 1: Restore, enhance, and protect resilient estuarine and nearshore marine fish habitat.	6
Goal 2: Ensure the continuation and effectiveness of PMEP and its work.	6
Goal 3: Increase Awareness of PMEP and its Products Across the West Coast and Nationally.....	6
Appendix 1	7



PMEP partners at 2022 midyear meeting in Marysville, Washington.

PMEP: A partnership at work

The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEP) is one of 20 fish habitat partnerships in the United States with national recognition and support from the National Fish Habitat Partnership. PMEP committees and leadership include federal, tribal, state, academic, and non-profit organizations throughout its region, engaging leaders in the field of fish habitat protection, restoration, resource management, and research. PMEP strives for membership that represents geographical, organizational, and cultural diversity of the West Coast and includes a broad range of perspectives, knowledge, and ideas.

This is the third strategic plan developed by PMEP and will be used to guide PMEP's work for the next five years. After PMEP's formation in 2012, a strategic framework was developed that focused its work from 2012 through 2017, during which time PMEP established regional boundaries and developed initial foundational assessments and launched its data system. A second strategic plan was developed and implemented from 2018 through 2022, further focusing PMEP's work on estuary restoration priorities and techniques and on nearshore and marine fish habitats. This new strategic plan will guide PMEP's work from 2023 through 2028. During these years, PMEP will continue progress on conserving estuary and nearshore marine fish habitat while integrating climate change effects into its priorities and considering diversity, equity and inclusion in all aspects of its operations, from committee membership, to project funding and communications. To focus implementation of PMEP's strategic plans, PMEP develops annual workplans which include specific actions undertaken each calendar year. And a communications framework (see Appendix 1), developed by an ad hoc communications committee, helps to focus PMEP outreach to support the goals of the strategic plan.

Geographic scope

PMEP's geographic scope encompasses coastal draining watersheds along the U.S. West Coast extending into the marine waters offshore to a depth of 200 meters. Within this spatial domain, PMEP focuses its attention on the estuarine and nearshore fish habitats that exist in tidal, subtidal, and marine waters of Washington, Oregon, and California.

PMEP has established four regions for the purpose of habitat characterization, information synthesis, outreach, habitat conservation and restoration goal setting: Salish Sea; Washington, Oregon, Northern California Coast; Central California; and Southern California Bight (Figure 1). Regional divides follow watershed and international boundaries and extend out to the 200 meter depth contour in close alignment with management boundaries in use by U.S. West Coast fisheries managers. Within these regions, PMEP members identify regional priorities for data compilation and



Figure 1. PMEP Ecoregion Boundaries

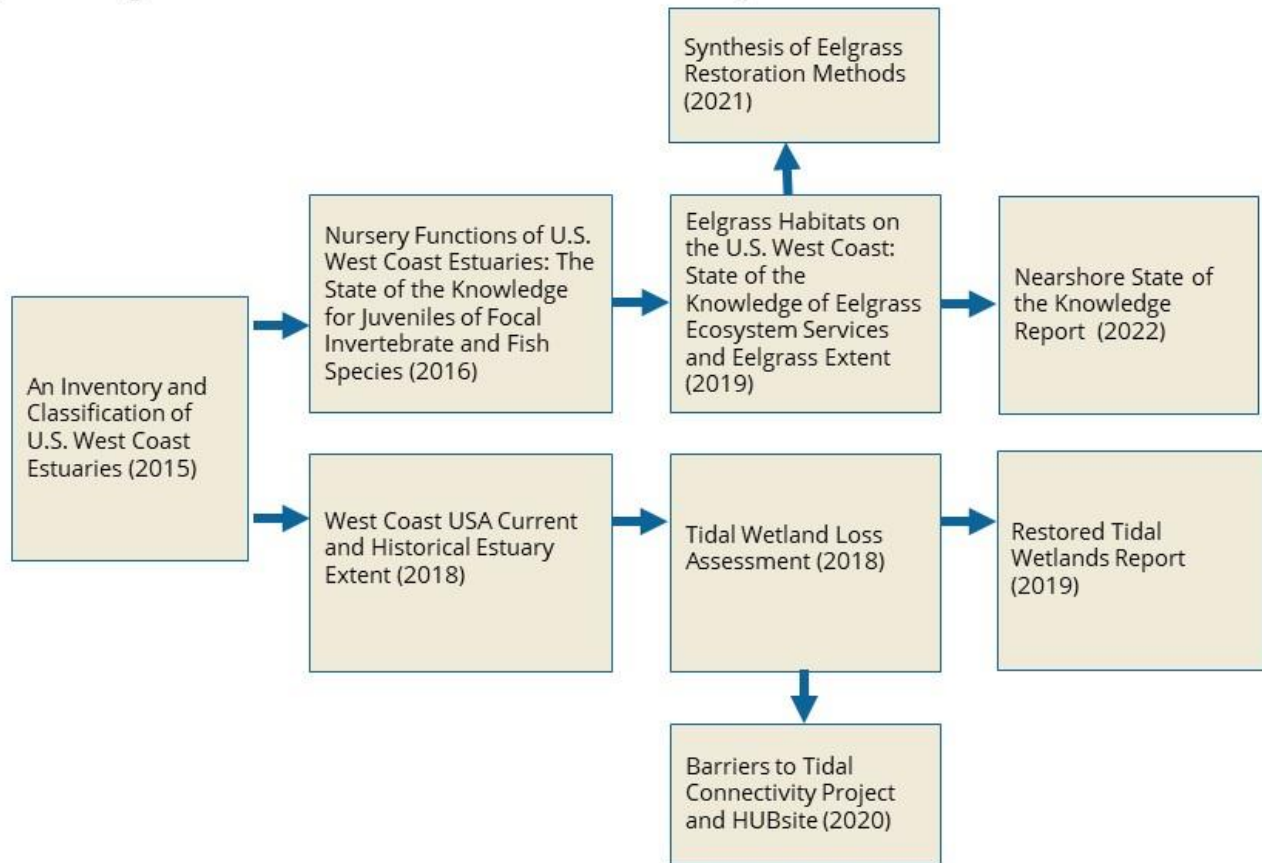
assessments which inform the projects PMEP supports. PMEP embraces ecosystem and process-based approaches to fish habitat restoration, which benefits multiple native fish species, including species of commercial and recreational value.

Assessments and Datasets

PMEP was formed in 2012 to conserve and restore healthy native fish populations within its regional scope. From its inception in 2012 through 2017, PMEP conducted a number of important foundational assessments that helped define its work within estuaries including an inventory of West Coast estuaries and an assessment of the nursery function of these systems for 15 commercially important and estuary dependent species. These products included the compilation and standardization of disparate estuary datasets along the U.S. West Coast and launched PMEP's spatial data system, which includes numerous compiled and third party datasets and is available on PMEP's website and through ArcGIS Online.

PMEP continues to develop foundational assessments and compiled datasets designed as resources for restoration practitioners, resource managers, and researchers. PMEPE’s assessment and data compilation work has followed a strategic path, with initial assessments guiding subsequent assessment priorities, project funding priorities, and refinement of strategic planning. Figure 2 shows the progression of PMEPE assessments and data compilations, reflected its focus on estuaries and nearshore marine fish habitats.

Figure 2. Progression of PMEPE Assessments and Data Compilations



Project support

PMEP provides funding support for on-the-ground fish habitat restoration projects and for assessment projects that align with PMEP priorities and the priorities of the National Fish Habitat Partnership. PMEP issues requests for project proposals yearly and selects a ranked list of projects. Funding support is provided by the National Fish Habitat Partnership and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Since 2012, PMEP has supported 28 projects with over one million dollars in funding. These projects have restored over 220 acres of fish habitat, reconnected over 9 miles of stream habitat and over 530 acres of estuary habitat, and removed 13 barriers to tidal connectivity and fish passage.

PMEP: The next five years

Vision and Mission

Our vision is for California, Oregon, and Washington to have functional, resilient estuarine and nearshore marine ecosystems that support healthy native fish populations.

Our mission is to provide science, data, and funding to conserve, enhance, and restore West Coast estuarine, nearshore, and marine fish habitat.

Goals, Strategies, and Objectives

Goal 1: Restore, enhance, and protect resilient estuarine, and nearshore marine fish habitat.

Goal 2: Ensure the continuation and effectiveness of PMEP and its work.

Goal 3: Increase awareness of PMEP and its products across the West Coast and nationally.

Strategies

- Fund projects - Distribute available funding to worthy fish habitat protection, restoration, and assessment projects.
- Provide data - Support the compilation, maintenance, and dissemination of PMEP core data layers and data tools.
- Produce assessments - Produce and disseminate priority assessment and synthesis reports to progress fish habitat protection and restoration.
- Collaborate and coordinate – Contribute to effective fish habitat conservation partnerships and collaborations.

- Communicate – Strategically communicate PMEP projects, data, and assessments to build greater awareness of progress and uptake of new information.
- Integrate climate and ocean change considerations – Consider climate and ocean change effects in all project selections, and habitat assessments, and other activities.

Objectives

Goal 1: Restore, enhance, and protect resilient estuarine and nearshore marine fish habitat.

Objectives:

1. Provide NFHP funding to projects annually consistent with PMEP priorities and NFHP National Conservation Priorities.
2. Facilitate the funding of projects annually through the NOAA Recreational Angler funding program and other programs with a NFHP nexus.
3. Maintain and update PMEP core data layers and data tools regularly.
4. Develop a new data tool for accessing nearshore data by 2024.
5. Annually identify and develop funding prospectuses for 2-3 new assessment, collaboration, or data project to progress PMEP's work.
6. Annually undertake at least one new assessment, collaboration, or data project to progress PMEP's work

Goal 2: Ensure the continuation and effectiveness of PMEP and its work.

Objectives:

1. Ensure the effectiveness of PMEP's committees and working groups
2. Ensure PMEP's committee membership reflect the diversity of perspectives, expertise, and geography necessary to effectively conduct our work.
3. Ensure PMEP's work is collaborative and strategic
4. Build an active network of collaborating organizations that support PMEP's work and advertise PMEP products within their own networks.
5. Maintain productive engagement with the National Fish Habitat Partnership.
6. Ensure PMEP has adequate capacity to conduct its work.

Goal 3: Increase Awareness of PMEP and its Products Across the West Coast and Nationally.

Objectives:

1. Use the PMEP Communications Framework as a guide for all communications activities.
2. Provide to targeted audiences accurate, engaging, and current information about PMEP funding and its work products
3. Increase the use of PMEP products, tools, and assessments.
4. Build and maintain an effective online communications presence.



APPENDIX 1

PMEP COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK 2023-2028

Introduction

The Pacific Marine and Estuarine Fish Habitat Partnership (PMEP) is one of 20 fish habitat partnerships in the United States formed to conserve and restore healthy native fish populations. PMEP's focus is on providing science, data, and funding to conserve, enhance, and restore nearshore and estuarine fish habitats in California, Oregon, and Washington.

The PMEP adopted a five-year Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 which identifies THREE overarching goals. Each year, PMEP develops an annual workplan to guide its work for the year. The workplan actions align with its strategic goals and include communications and outreach activities. This Communications Framework outlines how PMEP communications and outreach actions should be approached. It identifies objectives which are further articulated in the strategic plan. The framework identifies the target audience for PMEP communications, key messages that can consistently be incorporated into communications, and general strategies to employ to achieve its communications objectives. The framework is designed to be incorporated into PMEP's Strategic Plan and to be updated at least every five years when the strategic plan is updated. This framework can be updated more frequently if necessary to reflect changing priorities.

PMEP Vision and Mission

Our vision is for California, Oregon, and Washington to have functional, resilient estuarine and nearshore marine ecosystems that support healthy native fish populations.

Our mission is to provide science, data, and funding to conserve and restore West Coast nearshore and estuarine fish habitat.

We accomplish this mission as follows:

1. PMEP supports multi-species habitat protection and restoration efforts in Pacific estuarine and nearshore marine areas and helps advance region-wide priorities in those environments. PMEP works in a complementary and collaborative fashion with the many existing partners targeting estuarine and nearshore habitats along the Pacific Coast, as well as larger-scale regional initiatives.
2. PMEP gathers the expertise of local, state, national, and tribal governments, nonprofits and other private organizations, and academia in order to synthesize the best available information to assist efforts to protect and restore native fish habitat along the West Coast.
3. PMEP works to develop and compile new datasets to fill high-priority data gaps in our understanding of West Coast native fish habitat.
4. PMEP provides, in collaboration with its members and partners, targeted restoration and conservation funding to support on-the-ground work.

Communications Objectives, Target Audiences, Messages, and Strategies

Objectives

PMEP identified the following communications objectives that align with the goals identified in its strategic plan:

- Increase the use of PMEP products, tools and assessments to improve conservation and restoration along the West Coast.
- Build diverse partnerships and membership on PMEP Steering Committee and associated sub-committees and workgroups.
- Improve the quality and quantity of proposals received for PMEP funding.
- Integrate PMEP's approach to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into its communications.

Target Audiences

The audiences to be targeted to achieve these objectives are:

- Restoration and conservation practitioners and planners,
- Researchers, and
- Natural resource agency personnel.

Messages

The following key messages can be used consistently throughout PMEP communications materials and outreach.

- PMEP annually provides funding for on-the-ground restoration projects that achieve measurable restoration and conservation of fish habitat along the west coast. PMEP encourages projects that benefit to multiple non-salmonid species as well as salmonids.
- PMEP committees are the means of achieving collaborative decision-making and eliciting expert advice on PMEP products and actions. PMEP must ensure that each subcommittee and working group has the support necessary to be effective.
- PMEP's geographic scope encompasses coastal draining watersheds along the U.S. West Coast, extending into the marine waters offshore to a depth of 200 meters.
- With its partners, PMEP identifies key information gaps in the ability to protect and restore west coast fish habitat and strives to fill them. PMEP synthesizes the best available information including compiling datasets that enhance our understanding of this habitat.
- PMEP has gathered and synthesized existing estuary fish use and habitat conditions, eelgrass information, and tidal restoration data into online tools to allow for comparisons across the region. These datasets provide information that managers can use to make informed decisions.
- PMEP's data tools can be used to understand fish habitat response and adaptation to climate/ocean change.

- PMEP identifies key gaps in the knowledge of west coast fish habitat and seeks to fill those gaps collaboratively through support for partner projects and independent research, and assessments.
- PMEP works in a complementary and collaborative fashion with its many existing partners to advance region-wide priorities through federal, state, and local-level actions.
- PMEP partnerships benefit all partners by informing regional priorities, consolidating resources, and focusing on strategic priorities to improve restoration and conservation of estuary, marine and nearshore fish habitats along the west coast.

Strategies

The PMEP Communications objectives can be achieved by employing five strategies:

Conduct outreach at meetings and events

This strategy builds on the current high engagement levels of its partners at national and regional conferences and meetings where members of PMEP identified target audiences congregate. For these events, the effectiveness of the communication increases if PMEP is featured directly on the agenda or in a session.

Execute communications campaigns for new products and tools

PMEP regularly produces fish habitat assessments, reports and data compilations and develops trainings and tools. Developing and executing project-specific communications campaigns will ensure that new products are shared widely and uptake of new information results from PMEP's work.

Support active, effective committee engagement in PMEP activities

PMEP committees are the means of achieving collaborative decision-making and eliciting expert advice on PMEP products and actions. PMEP must ensure that each committee and working group has the support necessary to be effective.

Utilize partner communications networks

PMEP enjoys active involvement from over twenty organizations active in restoration and conservation along the west coast. Each of these organizations has its own communications methods and tools, including electronic newsletters, social media accounts, and blogs. PMEP can capitalize on opportunities to promote PMEP through these partner networks.

Expand PMEP's presence on social media platforms

Today, strategic use of social media platforms to amplify messages and availability of new products is a standard practice while utilization of traditional communication platforms for information (e.g., electronic newsletters and websites) by both core constituents and the public has continued to diminish. PMEP will explore a variety of social media platforms to more effectively support its mission.

Utilize PMEP electronic communications and website

Electronic distribution of a regular PMEP newsletter will increase PMEP's visibility. The newsletter should be linked to the website to drive readers to the website. Updates to data users through electronic notifications should be streamlined. Analytics of how many subscribers open the newsletter and what articles they read will be compiled regularly to assess the newsletter's reach.

The website is currently accessible on multiple platforms and the organization is adequate. The website is the portal to all PMEP's tools and assessments and should be promoted widely. The website will be updated with news and fresh content as often as possible. Website Analytics will be monitored to assess overall website effectiveness.