I. Introduction

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has Federal responsibility for the conservation and management of living marine resources under numerous Federal laws, including authorities under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 at seq.) (MSA). NMFS works under the MSA to conserve and enhance essential fish habitat (EFH).

II. Objective

It is NMFS’ policy to use our authorities under the MSA to ensure EFH is conserved and enhanced in order to contribute to the sustainability of federally-managed fish species.

III. Authorities and Responsibilities

It is the policy of NMFS Office of Habitat Conservation to ensure the conservation and enhancement of EFH in accordance with the MSA and other relevant authorities and guidance promulgated by Congress, NOAA and other Federal agencies.
IV. Measuring Effectiveness

This policy will be reviewed and updated if necessary in accordance with the NMFS Policy Directive System.

V. References

Procedural directives will be issued to implement this policy as needed.

Signed

Chris Oliver
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries

9/26/2018
Date