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# **NOAA Fisheries GARFO Aquaculture Update**

**NEFMC Habitat Committee/PDT  
Meeting  
10/26/2021**

# E.O. 13921, Section 7: Aquaculture Opportunity Areas



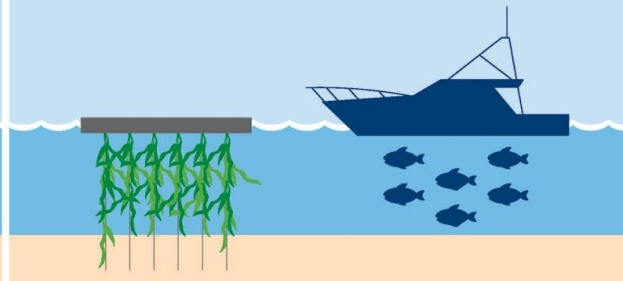
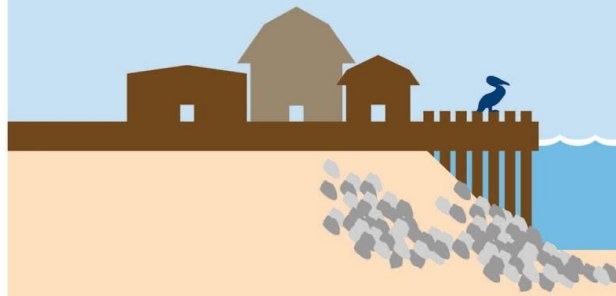
## What is an Aquaculture Opportunity Area?

**Aquaculture Opportunity Areas** show high potential for commercial aquaculture. A science and community-based approach to identifying these areas helps minimize interference with other enterprises, account for current fishing patterns, and protect the ecosystem.

AOAs will expand economic opportunities in coastal and rural areas, and increase our nation's seafood security.

AOAs use the best available science to find appropriate spaces for sustainable aquaculture.

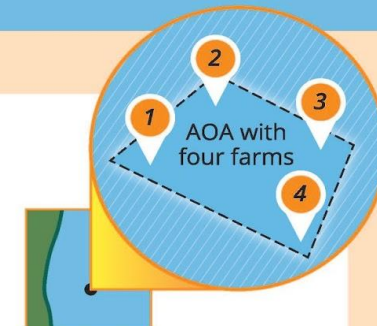
AOAs minimize interactions with other users, such as shipping, fishing, and the military.



### Assessment and Use of AOAs

Stakeholder input is essential in the design and location of AOAs and NOAA expects these areas will be shaped through a public process that allows constituents to share their community and stewardship goals, as well as critical insights.

AOA size, exact location, and farm types will be determined through spatial analysis and public input to expand sustainable domestic seafood production while minimizing potential user conflicts. Farms will still need to go through the permitting process and environmental reviews.



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# Aquaculture Opportunity Areas Update

June 2020



Now: October 2021

Happening soon!

## What:

Selected Gulf of Mexico and Southern CA as first two regions

Q&A, National and Regional rollouts; presentations & outreach

NCCOS data collection and modeling for siting analysis

RFI in October 2020; 5 listening sessions (3 national, 2 regional)

NCCOS draft Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas; peer review

Considering selection of third region, timing, resources

Gulf of Mexico and Southern CA Atlases publish this fall

Combine public input, results of Atlas, and other information to identify NEPA alternatives

NOI to prepare PEIS, with preliminary AOA alternatives to consider

Begin stakeholder outreach and coordination in third region; RFI

# Regional Federal Waters Aquaculture Projects Update

## Pre-Application Phase

- Manna Fish Farms Steelhead and Black Sea Bass Net Pens- NY off Long Island
  - Pre-Application meeting held Sept, 2020
  - No movement since pre-application meeting. Same proponent is moving forward on a proposed project in the Gulf of Mexico

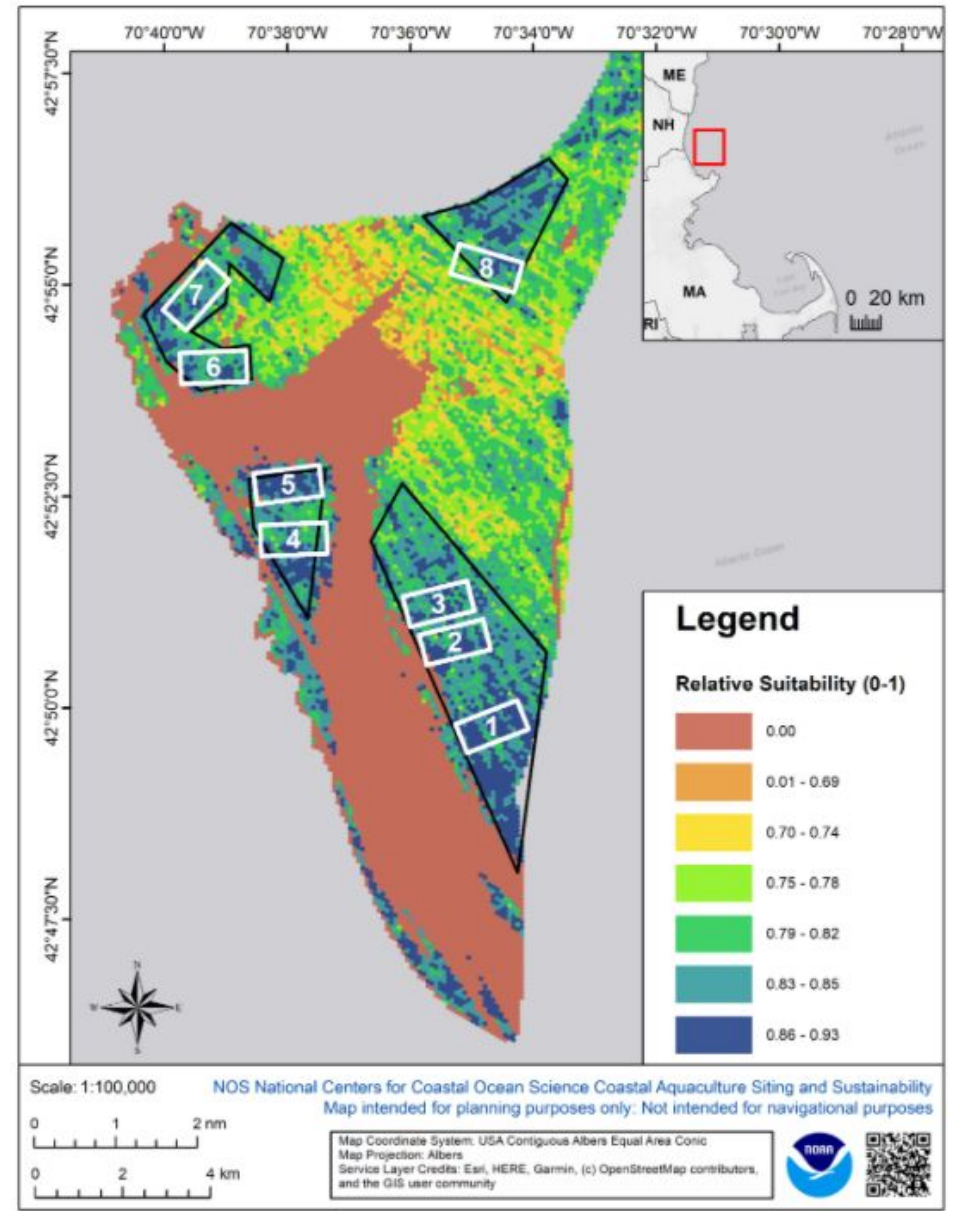
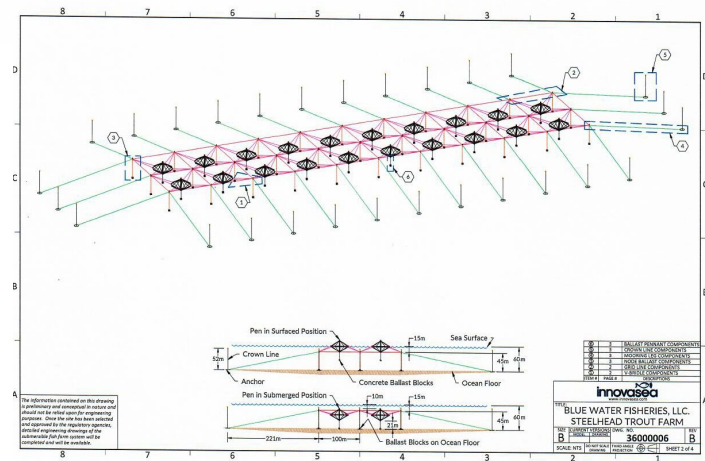
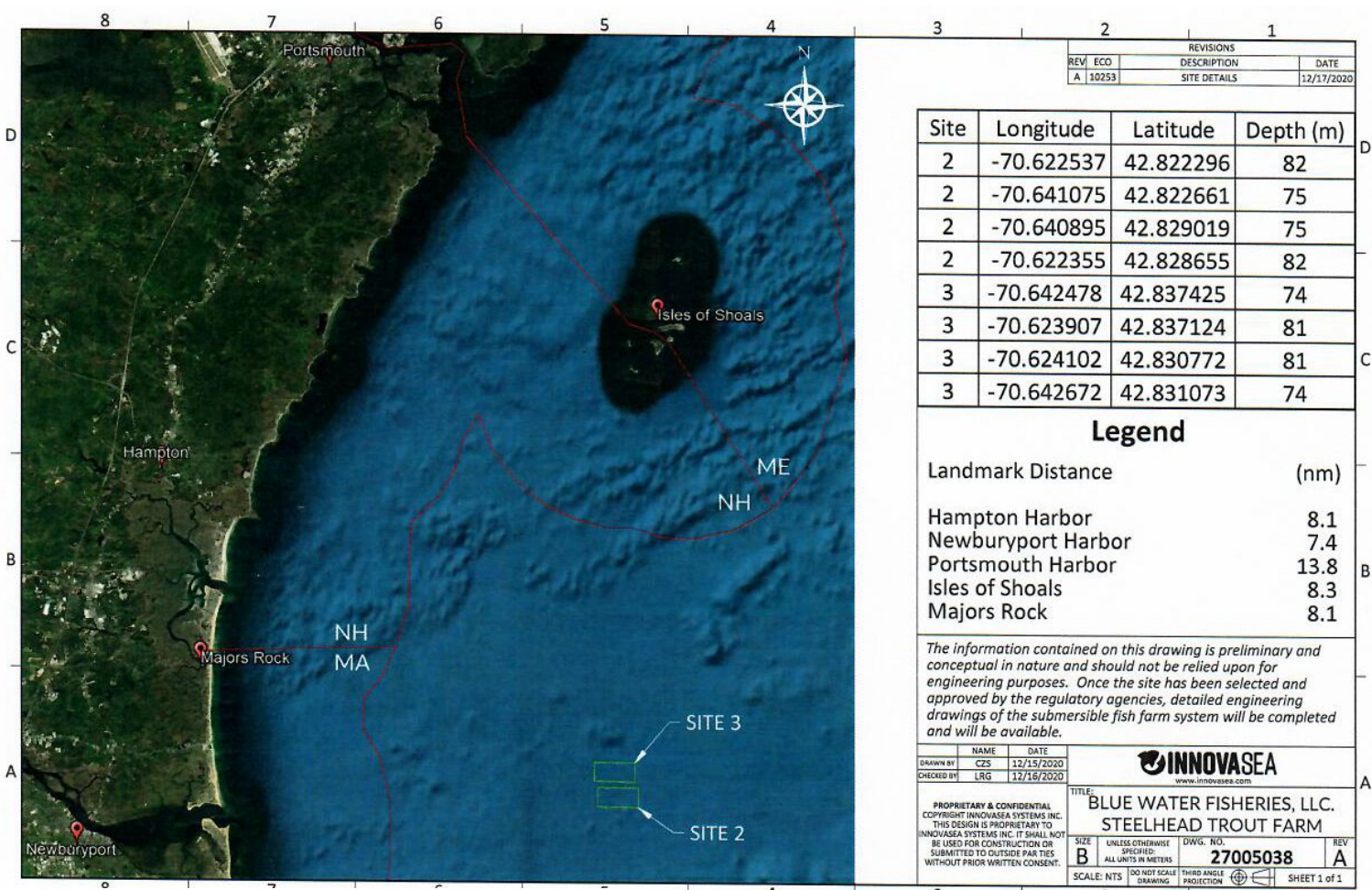
## Permit Application Phase

- NEMAC Mussel Longlines- MA off Cape Anne
  - Submitted application to ACOE to expand from 3-20 longlines on originally permitted site on Dec, 2019
  - ESA consultation has not been initiated due to incomplete Biological Assessment
- Blue Waters Fisheries LLC. Steelhead, Salmon, Lumpfish Net Pens- NH/MA off Newburyport\*
  - Permit applications submitted Jan, 2021
  - ACOE application accepted June, 2021 and public comment period held July, 2021
  - EPA NEPA EIS determination July, 2021
  - **NMFS Lead Federal Agency designation Aug, 2021**



# Blue Water Fisheries (BWF) Project Details

- The applicant proposes to construct a commercial-scale marine finfish aquaculture facility within federal waters ~ 7.5 miles ENE of Newburyport Harbor in water depths ~80m.
- As proposed, the facility will occupy two 265-acre sites. At each site there will be 20 submersible net pens in a 2 x 10 grid. The pens will remain submerged approximately 15 m below the surface except when being serviced.
- The applicant plans to initially deploy and operate four pens. At full operation he expects to operate 40 pens that will produce up to 25.6 million pounds of a combination of steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) **and Atlantic Salmon (*Salmo Salar*)** annually. Lumpfish (*Cyclopterus lumpus*) will also be stocked in the pens to manage external parasites on cultured fish.
- Operations will occur continuously throughout the year and will be based out of Portsmouth, NH.



**Figure 15.** High-high cluster areas (black polygons) overlaying the final suitability analysis output. Within each high-high area, slope, sediment type, depth, and general oceanography were assessed to further refine the clustered areas. Eight alternative locations were determined using the aforementioned factors (white polygons).



# E.O. Section 6: Removing Barriers to Aquaculture Permitting.

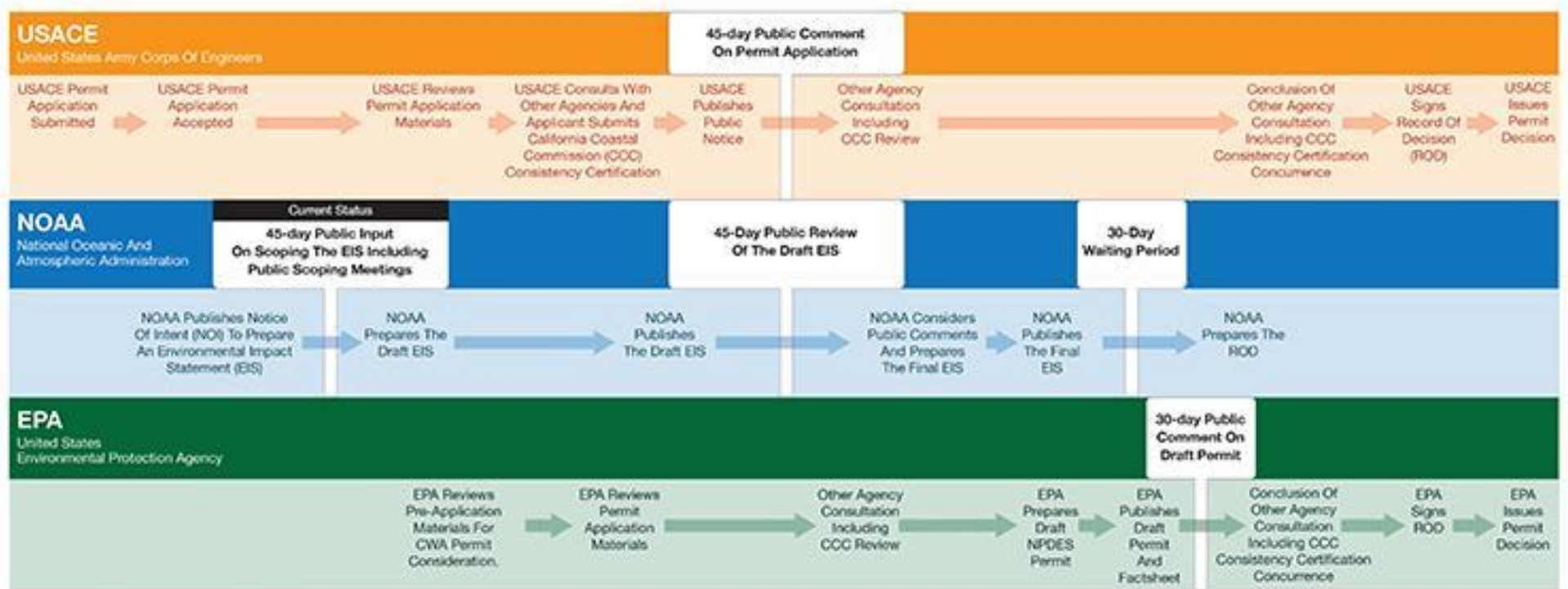
- NOAA is designated as the lead agency for NEPA when a project:
  - Requires environmental review or authorization by two or more agencies\*
  - Requires an environmental impact statement (EIS)
  - Is located outside of the waters of any State or Territory and within the exclusive economic zone of the United States
- All cooperating and participating agencies shall cooperate with the lead agency and all individual agency decisions shall be recorded in one ROD, unless the project sponsor requests that agencies issue separate NEPA documents.
- EIS development must be completed in 2 years



# NMFS as NEPA EIS Lead (example prior to EO)

NOAA is developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Pacific Ocean AquaFarms development of a commercial-scale finfish aquaculture facility. The facility will be located in federal waters off the coast of southern California.

The proposal will require federal permits and authorizations including applicable permits under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbor Act. These permits and authorizations fall under the authority of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers respectively. NMFS will serve as the “Lead Agency” and the EPA and USACE will serve as “Cooperating Agencies” for the purposes of preparing a draft EIS and final EIS for the project.



Note: For illustrative purposes only. Not to scale.

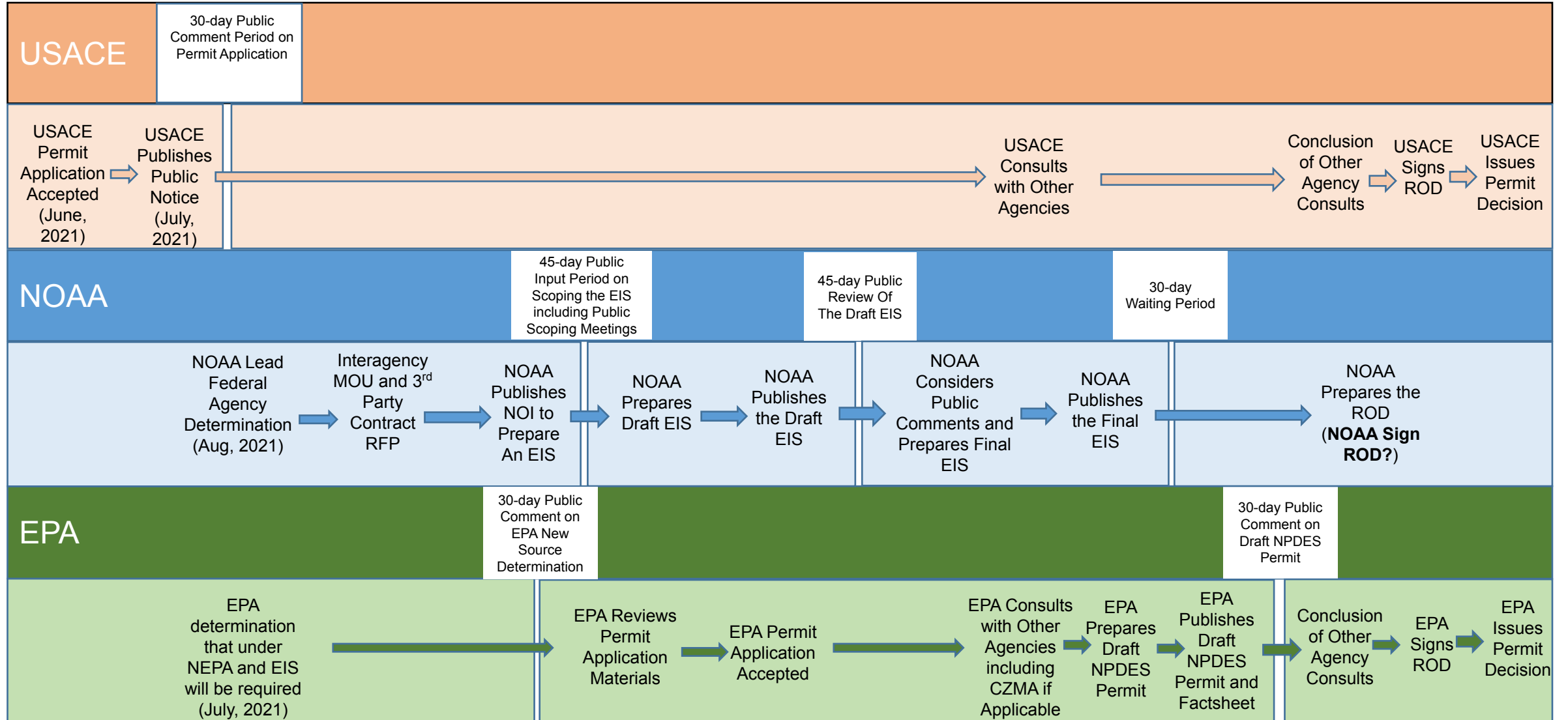


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# Blue Water Fisheries Environmental Review and Permitting Process

## DRAFT



# MSA Considerations Associated with the Addition of Atlantic Salmon

NEFMC has an FMP for Atlantic salmon

CFR § 648.41 Framework specifications *states*

(a) Within season management action. The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) may, at any time, initiate action to implement, add to or adjust Atlantic salmon management measures to:

(1) Allow for Atlantic salmon aquaculture projects in the EEZ, provided such an action is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Atlantic Salmon FMP

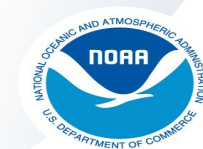
NMFS is working to evaluate the range of possible actions the NEFMC and GARFO are required to take under these regulations and the FMP if the project is to move forward with the culture of Atlantic salmon

In September, GARFO suggested NEFMC consider adding the initiation of a framework adjustment to the 2022 List of Council Priorities

# Thank You



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