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United States Fish and Wildlife Service  
Washington, DC 20240

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June 12, 1998

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**FISHERIES COORDINATION COUNCIL RELEASES REPORT ON  
FEDERAL AGENCIES' SUPPORT OF RECREATIONAL FISHERIES**

Federal agencies restored nearly 4,000 miles of streams and hundreds of thousands of acres of other waterways and wetlands to improve recreational fishing opportunities in 1997, according to the first biennial report issued by the National Recreational Fisheries Coordination Council.

The report, required by President Clinton's 1995 Executive Order on Recreational Fisheries, details actions taken by six Federal departments and the Environmental Protection Agency to restore aquatic ecosystems and recreational fisheries across the country.

"President Clinton's Executive Order has been an enormous benefit both to recreational fishing and to the healing of our Nation's waterways," said Jamie Rappaport Clark, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and co-chair of the council. "Federal agencies are now focused on the task of ensuring the future of healthy recreational fisheries and the opportunity for millions of Americans to fish."

"Our collective commitment to help conserve and enjoy our Nation's valuable fishery resources has built stronger fisheries habitat and laid the foundation for future angling opportunities," said Rolland A. Schmitt, director of the National Marine Fisheries Service and the other co-chair of the council. "The Federal team will continue to improve fisheries habitat and to educate the public about the importance of aquatic resources to our economy and society."

Executive Order 12962 established the council, which includes Federal agencies and bureaus from within the Departments of the Interior, Commerce, Agriculture, Energy, Transportation, Defense, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The order directs that these agencies, ". . . shall, to the extent permitted by law and where practicable, and in cooperation with States and Tribes, improve the quantity, function, sustainable productivity, and distribution of U.S. aquatic resources for increased recreational fishing opportunities . . ."

Subsequently, the council developed a nationwide *Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan*, and 15 individual agencies have developed agency-specific plans to implement the plan.

According to the report, in 1996 and 1997 Federal agencies:

- o Restored 338,301 acres of surface water and 3,992 acres of stream habitat;
- o Opened 17,439 acres of flat water for fish migration;
- o Restored 480,364 acres of riparian habitat;
- o Opened 7,625 miles and 3,990,660 acres for anadromous fish migration;
- o Built or maintained 5,094 facilities to enhance recreational fishing opportunities;
- o Provided recreational fishing opportunities at 702 Federal facilities;
- o Provided 297,372,990 days of recreational fishing on Federal lands in 1997.

In addition, more than 900,000 people participated in fishing and aquatic education programs sponsored by Federal agencies, including more than 9,600 during National Fishing Week and similar fishing events.

Each of the Federal agencies signatory to the *Conservation Plan* and represented on the council provided information and assisted in the preparation of the *Biennial Report*. The report also summarizes the specific accomplishments of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service in implementing the Joint Recreational Fishing/Endangered Species Act Policy required under Section 4 of the Executive Order.

For further information about implementation of the *Recreational Fishery Resources Conservation Plan*, contact Bob Batky (703-358-1715) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or Bill Price (301-427-2015) of the National Marine Fisheries Service.