PROTECTED AREAS - -
RESOURCE EVALUATION PROCESS

Information used by the council in the preparation of its protected areas data base came from several different sources. The information for the anadromous fish portion of the data base came from contracts which produced, primarily, presence-absence data. Information on non-anadromous resources was collected and evaluated by the four states in the Pacific Northwest Rivers Study.

The anadromous fish portion of the protected areas study was carried out by the Council. The Council contracted with the four state fish and wildlife agencies, the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a number of Indian tribes both within and without the Columbia River Basin. Those entities provided information and reports from their files on which species of salmon and steelhead occupy the rivers and streams in the region. In addition, within the Columbia River Basin the agencies were asked to identify potential habitat which could be used by salmon and steelhead. The contractors also supplied information about the location of the various stocks of salmon and steelhead identified in the study. Once this data had been collected it was entered into the Council's fish and wildlife data base. Following submittal to the Council, the agencies continued to refine, update, and verify their data. After verification, the data base was provided to interested members of the public and other governmental agencies for further review and scrutiny. This process was repeated twice before the data was finally used in developing the protected areas designations.

The Pacific Northwest Rivers Study, on the other hand, evaluated resources in a wide variety of categories, though the Council has used only information gathered in the following two areas: resident fish and wildlife. Each state developed its own process of evaluating its river resources. Some of the methods used varied by state and by resource category, though efforts were made to ensure an acceptable level of consistency between them.

For each of the resource categories studied, resource experts at the state, federal and tribal levels identified specific criteria and standards to be used in these river evaluations. The process did not require the collection of primary field information. The emphasis was placed on gathering as much existing information, expert evaluation, and public input as possible. In general terms the process began with an identification of the criteria that would be used to define the the unique or important aspects of the resource. Then, standards were layed out which set thresholds to aid in determining just how significant the particular resource is. A numeric value was then assigned by the resource experts, indicating the relative importance of the resource catagory for a given stream reach.

For example; stream reach 00-1234 has been shown to have a large rainbow trout population (a resident fishery). That is its major resource. The criteria used to examine its uniqueness might be its known ability to give anglers record-book catches