

MEMORANDUM

TO: AP and Council Members
FROM: Chris Oliver *Chris*
Executive Director
DATE: December 1, 2009
SUBJECT: Salmon Bycatch

ESTIMATED TIME 6 HOURS (All C-4 items)
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ACTION REQUIRED

- (c) Review Rural Community Outreach Committee report, review draft Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch outreach plan

BACKGROUND

The Rural Community Outreach Committee (committee) was appointed by the Council in June 2009. The three primary purposes of the committee, based on Council direction, are: 1) to advise the Council on how to provide opportunities for better understanding and participation from Alaska Native and rural communities; 2) to provide feedback on community impacts sections of specific analyses; and 3) to provide recommendations regarding which proposed Council actions need a specific outreach plan and prioritize multiple actions when necessary.

The committee first met in August 2009, and the Council received the committee report at its October 2009 meeting. At its first meeting, the committee addressed organizational, budget, and logistical issues, and discussed ideas on general ways to improve outreach (e.g., how do we communicate who the Council is, what it does, and how to participate). The committee also discussed ways to improve project-specific outreach, and reviewed several ongoing Council projects that may warrant a targeted outreach effort. The committee made several recommendations on these issues, as outlined in the August 12, 2009 committee report.¹

The committee also recommended that it convene again in November 2009, by teleconference. Members suggested meeting in person every other meeting, and holding meetings in rural locations when possible. In October, the Council generally approved the committee's recommendations. One of the committee's initial recommendations was that the upcoming non-Chinook (chum) salmon bycatch proposed action be a priority for rural outreach, similar to the recent Chinook salmon bycatch issue. The Council agreed with this recommendation, and it was thus determined timely to undertake an outreach effort with affected community and Alaska Native stakeholders.

The committee met on November 20, by teleconference, with the primary purpose of helping to develop an outreach plan for the chum salmon bycatch proposed action, given that the Council is scheduled to review the chum bycatch alternatives at the December 2009 Council meeting. Thus, while the

¹http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/current_issues/RuralOutreach/RCOcreport81209.pdf

committee's agenda included updates on previous recommendations, as well as other issues, the primary focus was providing input as to how an outreach plan should be developed for the proposed action on chum salmon bycatch. The November 20, 2009 committee report is attached as Item C-4(c)(1).

Staff has attempted to incorporate the committee's feedback into a draft chum salmon bycatch outreach plan for Council consideration at this meeting, recognizing that the outreach plan is dependent upon the current schedule proposed in the analytical action plan and Council direction. For example, the NEPA analysis of the proposed action is currently scheduled to be an environmental assessment, thus, the analytical schedule is based on this premise, recognizing that it is possible to determine that an EIS is necessary during development of the analysis. This schedule is also tentative pending Council direction in December 2009 and in the future. The determination that an EIS is necessary, addition of new alternatives, changes to the meeting schedule, and additional outreach meetings, are examples of factors that could alter the schedule. The draft outreach plan for Bering Sea chum salmon bycatch is provided as Item C-4(c)(2).

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to review the Rural Community Outreach Committee report from November 20, as well as the draft chum salmon bycatch outreach plan, which attempts to incorporate the committee's recommendations.

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Rural Community Outreach Committee Meeting Report

November 20, 2009

8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Teleconference: (907) 271-2896

Committee: Eric Olson (Chair), Paula Cullenberg, Ole Olsen, Pete Probasco, Jennifer Hooper, Tom Okleasik, Duncan Fields. **NPFMC staff:** Chris Oliver, Nicole Kimball.

Other Participants: Jason Anderson (Best Use Cooperative), Becca Robbins-Gisclair (Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association), Sally Bibb (NMFS AKR), Becky Carls (NMFS AKR), Paul MacGregor (At-sea Processors Association), Melanie Brown (NMFS AKR), Mike Sloan (Kawerak, Inc.), Dave Benson (NPFMC member), Richard Tuluk (Coastal Villages Region Fund), Mary McDowell (Pacific Seafood Processors Association), Gale Vick (Gulf Coastal Communities Coalition), Chuck McCallum (Gulf Coastal Communities Coalition), Neil Rodriquez (Coastal Villages Region Fund), Tim Smith (Nome Fishermen's Association).

I. Introductions

- Review of agenda -- additions?

Introductions were made and the committee reviewed the agenda. The agenda was approved with no additions.

II. Staff updates on previous recommendations

- Re-design of Council website, including a rural community component

Chris Oliver (NPFMC) reported that the Council website is in the process of being re-designed, and that a separate link for rural outreach will be included in order to make it easier for the public to navigate the website and find specific issues. When completed, the Council and the committee can review the first effort and provide input. The committee noted the difficulty in identifying which issues should be included under the rural outreach link. Staff responded that it will be an ongoing process to determine the issues most important to rural communities, and that the website can provide duplicative links if appropriate. In effect, 'chum salmon bycatch' documents may be appropriately linked under two headings (e.g., 'bycatch issues' and 'rural outreach'). The committee also noted that if possible, the Council should develop links and format documents such that they are smaller and easier to download, as many communities in rural Alaska have slow internet connections. The committee also recommended that the Council website better highlight links and documents that describe how the Council process works and how to participate.

- Development of regional meeting calendar

Sally Bibb (NMFS) provided an update on efforts to create a calendar of regional meetings for posting on the NMFS and Council websites. Prior to the meeting, staff sent the committee a draft Google calendar developed as an example, and the committee suggested other meetings to add. The committee also discussed the possibility of purchasing software in order to link each meeting posted on the calendar to its corresponding website for further details. The main concerns noted were: 1) agency resources are needed to keep such a calendar updated, and there was a question as to whether this is a high priority relative to other recommendations to improve outreach, and 2) if the calendar is not carefully monitored, the public could potentially receive incorrect information about a meeting if something changes.

Sally reported that NMFS does not have dedicated staff to maintain such a calendar at this time, but needs to understand whether this is a high priority from the committee's perspective. The committee generally

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liked the idea of the calendar, not only for public and committee use, but also for the Council's use in planning Council, committee, and rural outreach meetings. The committee suggested starting with Google calendar as a pilot project (without interactive weblinks to meetings), and allowing outreach committee members to have access such that they could add or edit a meeting. NMFS could provide the calendar on the Alaska Region website, and the Council website could link to it. While the calendar would be regularly updated, a disclaimer could be provided such that the Council and NMFS are not responsible if meeting dates or locations change.

- Development of rural community contact list

Nicole Kimball (NPFMC) reported that the Council has been refining a large mailing list for communities, Alaska Native entities, and tribes. The excel spreadsheet was sent to committee members for review and comment on September 17. The committee requested that staff send it again for review, and requested that staff create two additional qualifiers as time allows, categorizing each entity by type and region. The committee suggested using the 12 ANCSA regions for the purpose of categorizing by region.

- Audio web-streaming the Council meetings

Nicole updated the committee on the progress of audio web-streaming the Council meetings. This technology was tested during the October 2009 Council meeting, and it will be in place for the December meeting and in the future. Prior to each Council meeting, a link will be available on the Council website which outlines a one-time connection process for the public, to last the duration of the Council meeting. Committee members that streamed the October meeting reported few problems once a connection was established. The committee noted that this is an important effort in getting real-time information to rural Alaska, and suggested posting the Advisory Panel and Science and Statistical Committee minutes, as well as presentation materials, on the weblink when available. This program also allows the public to record the meeting, or portions of the meeting, via the internet. Staff reported that a link has been posted on the Council website that explains both the audio broadcasts of the Council meetings and the audio files that are available through the Council office post-meeting: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/audio.pdf>.

- Outreach budget

Chris reported that he recently submitted the Council's 5-year budget application to NOAA. It is possible the Council could receive a small increase in 2010. The Council has allocated \$80k annually to the outreach committee and rural outreach efforts, which includes mailings, meetings, travel, etc. There is flexibility annually, in that if the Council spends less in one year, the excess can be rolled to the next year. The committee recognized this benefit, as project-specific outreach may need to be a significant component in some years, and less so in others. Most committee members noted that they would ideally like to see the outreach budget increase, with the potential for hiring an outreach coordinator position, understanding that the Council's first hiring priority is another analyst/economist. One member suggested hiring Council rural liaisons for several regional hubs throughout Alaska.

The committee discussed contracting with individuals in several rural communities to be regional outreach conduits or points of contact on Council issues, as opposed to hiring several full-time Council staff positions. This concept appeared to be more realistic given budget limitations, and would allow the Council to move funding around to support outreach in specific years or geographic areas as necessary.

- Update on NMFS tribal consultation meeting

Sally Bibb reported on a November 9 – 10 meeting NMFS hosted on improving the tribal consultation process required under Executive Order 13175. NMFS contracted with RurAL CAP to coordinate the meeting, based on criticism regarding the inadequacies of the current NMFS tribal consultation process.

RurAL CAP contacted the regional Alaska Native non-profit corporations in each of the 12 regions, and asked them to select a tribal member from the region to participate. NMFS funded accommodations in and travel to Anchorage.

The primary purpose of the meeting was to ask participants to identify deficiencies in the current process, outline the characteristics and components of an ideal process, and discuss successes and failures experienced in other agency processes. The committee developed a list of recommendations, and a report is being developed from this meeting. When the report is finalized, it will be provided to the Council, NMFS, and the Department of Commerce.

Sally also reported that this meeting was held just after President Obama held a Tribal Nations conference in Washington, DC. On November 5, the President issued a memo to the heads of executive departments and agencies on tribal consultation and the primary executive order that describes these requirements (E.O. 13175). The memo reaffirms the importance of the tribal consultation responsibilities of executive agencies, and directs each agency (e.g., Department of Commerce) to submit a plan on how to comply with the order. The plan must be developed in consultation with tribes and submitted to OMB within 90 days. While the direction from DOC to NOAA is crucial, NMFS Alaska Region will continue to develop its process, which is intended to be an ongoing relationship with tribes. It was recognized that it is difficult, but necessary, to integrate tribal consultation early in the process, such that tribes are consulted during the policy-making stage (i.e., the Council process). NMFS would like to continue to work with the Council's outreach committee, due to the overlap in several components of outreach and tribal consultation, such as education and two-way communication.

III. Consideration of chum salmon bycatch outreach plan

Nicole provided a brief overview of the previous outreach plan for the Chinook salmon bycatch issue, to facilitate discussion of a draft outreach plan for the proposed chum salmon bycatch action. A tentative schedule for the chum salmon bycatch analysis was also provided. Committee members generally agreed with the schedule, and focused their comments on when regional outreach meetings should occur within that timeframe. The committee asked that the schedule be provided to the public (posted) after it is approved by the Council.

Nicole outlined the three primary components of a potential chum outreach plan: direct mailings; regional outreach meetings; and documentation and presentation of results to the Council. The committee agreed with this general approach, and the discussion focused primarily on the regional outreach meetings. Staff posed several questions including: the timing at which regional outreach meeting should occur in the overall schedule; whether the regional meetings proposed are appropriate in terms of participants, timing, and location; and whether the committee can identify priority meetings, should budget limitations, staff availability, or meeting schedule overlap prevent outreach at one or more proposed meetings. Staff proposed working with eight entities, to ask whether they want to schedule chum salmon bycatch on the agendas of their regional meetings. If so, staff proposed having Council staff and one or two Council members attend each meeting, provide an overview of the proposed action, and respond to questions (see proposed chum salmon bycatch outreach plan for details). Working with established entities which have regular in-region meetings tends to reach more stakeholders than if the Council hosted its own outreach meeting in the community. The meetings proposed by staff to be included in the draft chum bycatch outreach plan are as follows. All of these meetings are open to the public. Note that due to the extended timeframe, the exact dates and locations for most of these meetings have not yet been scheduled.

Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Western Interior Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)

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Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Association of Village Council Presidents ¹	(October 2010, Bethel)
Tanana Chiefs Conference annual meeting	(Mar 15 – 19, 2011; Fairbanks)
Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Assn annual meeting	(Feb 2011)

One committee member noted that the February/March timeframe is a relatively short travel window, and that spreading out meetings may be beneficial due to weather, overlapping meeting schedules, etc. Staff agreed, but noted that in order to coordinate with the above entities, staff must conform to their established meeting schedules, as long as they are also within the timeframe for developing the chum analysis. While the committee thought the selected meetings were appropriate, one member also suggested that staff partner with another local entity (e.g., regional non-profit, borough, etc.) in the community in order to broaden publicity for and participation at the meeting. The RAC meetings are rotated among member villages, so many of those meetings are not in regional hubs, but in smaller villages. One member also noted that notice for the Seward Peninsula RAC meeting should be inclusive of the Northwest Arctic communities, so that Arctic residents know they have the opportunity to attend and participate. In addition, the committee suggested offering to present to the Yukon River Panel, as was done for the Chinook salmon bycatch issue. The Panel's December 5 – 11, 2010 meeting is located in Alaska, and its March 20 – 26, 2011 meeting is in the Yukon Territory.

Timing of the outreach meetings were also a concern. Staff had proposed February/March 2011, in order to correspond with regularly scheduled regional meetings *and* the release of a preliminary analysis, but *prior to* the Council's final action (tentatively scheduled for June 2011). The committee recognized the desire to have some level of impact analysis provided at the outreach meetings, but was concerned with the majority of community outreach occurring late in the analytical process. While several direct mailings are planned prior to the Council's final review and selection of the suite of alternatives for analysis, the committee suggested conducting some other type of outreach prior to the Council's final revision of the alternatives, such that rural stakeholders could have direct feedback at that stage. The committee also discussed the possibility of conducting some regional meetings in fall 2010, which would be prior to a draft analysis.

In sum, the committee recommended a schedule that would start some regional outreach meetings in late 2010 (AVCP and potentially, Yukon River Panel), and the remainder in early 2011. In addition, in order to get feedback prior to the Council's tentatively scheduled final review of the alternatives (June 2010) the committee recommended that the Council attempt to schedule a teleconference, using an internet program that allows for staff presentations to be provided on the web real-time, that would create a forum for the public to provide input early in the process. Thus, this teleconference would have to be publicized and scheduled for early 2010. While a draft analysis would not yet be available, staff could present the analytical schedule, important Council meeting dates, chum bycatch trend data to-date, the current suite of alternatives, and information on how to participate in the Council process. It was recognized that the timing of this teleconference, and all outreach efforts, are directly dependent on the analytical schedule and schedule for Council action.

Additionally, the committee recommended that the chum salmon bycatch outreach plan include: 1) requesting booth space at the Alaska Federation of Natives annual meeting in October 2010; 2) conducting radio interviews for rural community radio stations; and 3) providing information and/or a press release to newspapers in regional hubs. Staff noted that they would incorporate the committee's recommendations into the draft chum salmon bycatch outreach plan being developed for Council review at the December 2009 Council meeting.

¹The AVCP annual convention is in October. However, in 2009, the AVCP hosted a special mid-year convention in March.

IV. Development of written guidelines for a statewide/regional/project-specific outreach approach

This agenda item stemmed from a previous (August 2009) committee recommendation. The committee concluded that there was not sufficient time to develop written guidelines, and that it would be more effectively discussed at an in-person committee meeting. Committee members were encouraged to consider and draft potential guidelines to facilitate discussion at the next meeting.

V. Discuss regional partnership approach

Staff provided a short introduction to this issue, as it stems from a previous (August 2009) committee recommendation. Committee members outlined several different components to this potential approach, including development of an educational workshop on the Council process and how to participate effectively. This workshop could be provided in several regions of Alaska. Paula Cullenberg (Alaska Sea Grant) noted that the Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program has been approached by three different groups for funding to develop a similar workshop, with various differences. Thus, the Council should consider whether this workshop should be developed directly by the Council or could be addressed by a community group. Others suggested that the Council could put together a basic powerpoint on the Council process, and then work with community representatives in the regions to distribute and hold their own workshops.

The committee also discussed how to define regions for this purpose. Some members voiced support for identifying a point of contact or liaison in each of the 12 geographic ANCSA regions. Concerns were expressed with this approach, although others noted that these are meant only as geographic boundaries, and would not mean that the ANCSA corporations themselves would be the points of contact.

The committee determined that more consideration is needed regarding defining the regional approach, including identification of the audience for an educational workshop (e.g., the public vs. training of specific regional representatives). One member noted that they would support using a portion of the Council outreach budget to fund individuals' travel to such a workshop or to serve as a regional point of contact for the process.

The committee agreed to defer this discussion until its next meeting, and staff suggested that committee members come prepared with an outline of what the regional partnership approach means and would look like. Paula also offered to contact the three groups that have approached Sea Grant with proposals for educational workshops on the Council process, and report to the committee regarding their specific proposals and intent.

VI. Timing & need for next meeting

The committee suggested meeting again (in person) on February 23, in Anchorage, as committee members could coordinate their travel with the Northern Bering Sea Research Area Community and Subsistence Workshop (February 24 – 25, Anchorage). The committee suggested the agenda may include: updates on the December 2009 and February 2010 Council meeting actions; an in-depth discussion of the regional partnership approach; development of guidelines for Council outreach in general; presentations from other agencies (e.g., NPRB, ADF&G, Federal Subsistence Board) that conduct rural outreach; an update on the development of a chum salmon bycatch outreach plan; and an update from NMFS on the DOC tribal consultation plan.

VII. Summary of recommendations

1. **Council website re-design.** When completed, the committee would like to review and provide feedback on the re-design. If possible, the Council should develop links and format documents such that they are smaller and easier to download, as many communities in rural Alaska have slow internet connections. The committee also recommended that the Council website better highlight links and documents that describe how the Council process works and how to participate.
2. **Regional meeting calendar.** The committee suggested starting with Google calendar as a pilot project (without interactive weblinks to meetings), and allowing outreach committee members to have access such that they could add or edit a meeting. NMFS could provide the calendar on the Alaska Region website, and the Council website could link to it.
3. **Development of rural community contact list.** The committee requested that staff send it again for review, and requested that staff create two additional qualifiers as time allows, categorizing each entity by type and region. The committee suggested using the 12 ANCSA regions for the purpose of categorizing by region.
4. **Chum salmon bycatch outreach plan.** The committee supported the overall approach for the chum salmon bycatch outreach plan as outlined by staff (see Section III). In addition to the eight regional outreach meetings proposed by staff, the committee suggested offering to present to the Yukon River Panel. The committee recommended a schedule that would start some regional outreach meetings in late 2010 (AVCP and potentially, Yukon River Panel), and the remainder in early 2011. In addition, in order to get feedback prior to the Council's tentatively scheduled final review of the alternatives (June 2010) the committee recommended that the Council attempt to schedule a teleconference, using an internet program that allows for staff presentations to be provided on the web real-time, that would create a forum for the public to provide input early in the process. Thus, this teleconference would have to be publicized and scheduled for early 2010. Additionally, the committee recommended that the chum salmon bycatch outreach plan include: 1) requesting booth space at the Alaska Federation of Natives annual meeting in October 2010; 2) conducting radio interviews for rural community radio stations; and 3) providing information and/or a press release to newspapers in regional hubs.
5. **Timing and agenda for next meeting.** The committee suggested meeting again (in person) on February 23, in Anchorage. The agenda may include: updates on the December 2009 and February 2010 Council meeting actions; an in-depth discussion of the regional partnership approach; development of guidelines for Council outreach in general; presentations from other agencies (e.g., NPRB, ADF&G, Federal Subsistence Board) that conduct rural outreach; an update on the development of a chum salmon bycatch outreach plan; and an update from NMFS on the DOC tribal consultation plan.

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Outreach Plan for EA/RIR/IRFA on Non-Chinook Salmon Bycatch in the Bering Sea Pollock Fishery

December 2009

I. Genesis for outreach plan

As a result of one of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council's (Council) policy priorities, it is developing a draft policy approach to focus on improving outreach and communications with rural communities and Alaska Native entities and developing a method for systematic documentation of Alaska Native and community participation in the development of fishery management actions.¹ Upon review of several suggestions to expand both ongoing communication and outreach specific to particular projects,² the Council initiated a small workgroup to further review potential approaches and provide recommendations. Upon review of the workgroup report in February 2009, the Council approved the workgroup's primary recommendation to initiate a standing committee (the Rural Community Outreach Committee) to provide input to the Council on ways to improve outreach to communities and Alaska Native entities. The committee has three primary tasks: 1) to advise the Council on how to provide opportunities for better understanding and participation from Native Alaska and rural communities; 2) to provide feedback on community impacts sections of specific analyses; and 3) to provide recommendations regarding which proposed Council actions need a specific outreach plan and prioritize multiple actions when necessary. The committee was initiated in June 2009.

In addition to the stated Council policy priority, the need to improve the stakeholder participation process was highlighted during development of the Chinook salmon bycatch analysis. The Council made efforts to solicit and obtain as much input as possible on the proposed action from Alaska Natives, rural communities, and other affected stakeholders. This outreach effort, specific to Chinook salmon bycatch management, dovetailed with the Council's overall community and Alaska Native stakeholder participation policy.

The Council's Rural Community Outreach Committee met in August 2009 and recommended that the upcoming non-Chinook (chum)³ salmon bycatch issue be a priority for rural outreach, similar to the Chinook salmon bycatch issue. The Council agreed with this recommendation, and it was thus determined timely to undertake an outreach effort with affected community and Native stakeholders during the development of the draft EA/RIR/IRFA (analysis), well prior to final Council action. The committee met again in November 2009, with the primary purpose of helping to develop an outreach plan for this issue, given that the Council is scheduled to review the chum bycatch alternatives at its December 2009 meeting. Note that in October, the Council's Salmon Bycatch Workgroup also recommended that outreach begin prior to approval of the final alternatives. Both the workgroup and November committee report are on the Council website.

The outreach plan for chum salmon bycatch management was developed by Council staff with input from NMFS, the Rural Community Outreach Committee, and affected stakeholders. It is intended to improve the Council's decision-making processes on the proposed action, as well as enable the Council to maintain ongoing and proactive relations with Alaska Native and rural communities. Another of the objectives of the plan is to coordinate with NMFS' tribal consultation activities, to prevent a duplication

¹This policy priority is identified in the Council's workplan resulting from the Programmatic SEIS.

²http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc/Tasking/community_stakeholder.pdf

³While the proposed action would regulate all non-Chinook salmon bycatch, including sockeye, coho, pink, and chum salmon, chum salmon comprises over 99.6% of the total catch in this category (average 2001 – 2007). Thus, the proposed action is commonly referred to as the chum salmon bycatch issue.

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of efforts between the Council and NMFS, which includes not confusing the public with divergent processes or providing inconsistent information.

The remainder of the outreach plan outlines the analytical requirements and the tentative schedule for Council action on the chum bycatch issue, and a broad overview of the primary components of the chum salmon bycatch outreach plan. The final outreach report will be included, in part or in whole, in the analysis submitted to the Council prior to its final recommendation.

II. Analysis and tentative schedule for Council action on chum bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery

An analytical document is being prepared to assist planning and will serve as the central decision-making document for management measures being developed by Council to manage chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fishery, in compliance with the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA). Analyses under two laws and an executive order are required to be provided to the Council to inform its decision on this action. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the preparation of either an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The analysis will also include a regulatory impact review (RIR) as required by Executive Order 12866 and an initial regulatory flexibility analysis (IRFA), as required by the Regulatory Flexibility Act. The document will provide decision-makers and the public with an evaluation of the environmental, social, and economic effects of alternatives for managing chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fisheries. The suite of alternatives for analysis will be attached to this outreach plan after the December 2009 Council meeting and updated as necessary.

Currently, the NEPA analysis of the proposed action is scheduled to be an environmental assessment, thus, the following tentative schedule is based on this premise, recognizing that it is possible to determine that an EIS is necessary during development of the analysis. This analytical schedule is proposed in the action plan for the chum salmon bycatch analysis (see agenda item C-4(b) at the December Council meeting), and staff incorporated the proposed outreach meetings (in italics) into the schedule below. This schedule is also tentative pending Council direction in December 2009 and in the future. The determination that an EIS is necessary, addition of new alternatives, changes to the meeting schedule, and additional outreach meetings, are examples of factors that could alter the schedule.

December 2009:	Council review and refine alternatives; discuss timeline; request for staff assistance/data from ADF&G; review of draft outreach plan.
February 2010:	SSC review of methodological approach for analysis and review of available data/discussion of methods for dealing with data limitations.
April 2010:	Not on Council agenda (unless requested).
May 2010:	<i>Proposed community teleconference in order to receive input prior to Council final review of alternatives. Staff presents analytical schedule, Council meeting dates, chum bycatch trend data to-date, current suite of alternatives, and information on how to participate in the Council process.</i>

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June 2010:	Council review and revise alternatives (final opportunity to revise alternative prior to initial review analysis); review of draft subsistence and commercial sections.
<i>October 2010:</i>	<i>Outreach meeting on proposed action (AVCP, Bethel)</i>
<i>December 2010:</i>	<i>Potential presentation to Yukon River Panel</i>
June - December 2010:	Preparation of initial review draft (given staff workload and timing).
Mid-January 2011:	Initial review draft available.
February 2011 (Seattle, WA):	Council initial review; Council selection of preliminary preferred alternative (PPA); must be within range of alternatives analyzed.
<i>February/March 2011:</i>	<i>Outreach meetings on Council initial review draft (and PPA). Potentially seven regional meetings.</i>
February - April 2011:	Preparation of revised analysis for public review (for Council final action).
May 2011:	Public review draft analysis available.
June 2011 (Nome, AK):	Council final action; selection of preferred alternative.

Note that an alternative schedule is also provided for consideration by the Council in the chum salmon bycatch action plan. The alternative schedule proposes a preliminary review of the analysis in February 2011, outreach meetings in February/March 2011 as noted above, and initial review and selection of a preliminary preferred alternative (PPA) at the June 2011 meeting in Nome. This would allow several advantages with regard to rural community outreach: input provided at the February/March 2011 community outreach meetings would be available to the Council *prior* to initial review and selection of a PPA; initial review and selection of a PPA would occur in rural Alaska, as opposed to Seattle; and there would be more time between the outreach meetings and Council final action for the public to provide input. However, the alternative schedule would necessarily delay final action on the analysis until at least October 2011, but would not necessarily affect the implementation date.

III. Outreach components

The following sections outline three general components of the outreach plan for the proposed action on chum salmon bycatch in the Bering Sea pollock fisheries. These include: direct mailings to stakeholders; community outreach meetings; additional outreach; and documentation of rural outreach meeting results.

Note also that NMFS undertook scoping for the alternatives in late March 2009, and the scoping report was provided to the Council in June 2009. Scoping is the term used for involving the public in the NEPA process at its initial stages. Scoping is an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed in an EA or EIS and for identifying the significant issues related to the proposed action. A principal objective of scoping and public involvement process is to identify a range of reasonable of management alternatives that will delineate critical issues and provide a clear basis for distinguishing among those alternatives and selecting a preferred alternative.

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Through the notice of intent, NMFS notified the public that a NEPA analysis and decision-making process for the proposed action has been initiated so that interested or affected people may participate and contribute to the final decision. Scoping is accomplished through written communications and consultations with agency officials, interested members of the public and organizations, Alaska Native representatives, and State and local governments. The formal scoping period began with the publication of a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* on January 8, 2009 (74 FR 798). Public comments were due to NMFS by March 23, 2009. In the Notice of Intent, NMFS requested written comments from the public on the range of alternatives to be analyzed and on the environmental, social, and economic issues to be considered in the analysis.

The scoping report summarizes the comments received during the January 8, 2009 to March 23, 2009, scoping period, and summarizes the issues associated with the proposed action and describes alternative management measures raised in public comment during the scoping process. The purpose of the report is to inform the Council and the public of the results of scoping and to assist in the development of the range alternatives and analysis. NMFS received four written comments from the public and interested parties. (Appendix 1 to the Scoping Report contains copies of the comments.) The NMFS Alaska Region web site contains the notice of intent, the scoping report, and related additional information.⁴

Direct mailings to stakeholders

On September 18, 2009, the Council provided a mailing to over 600 stakeholders, including community governments, regional and village Native corporations, regional non-profit Native corporations, tribal entities, Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council coordinators, Community Development Quota corporations, ADF&G Regional Coordinators, and other community or Native entities. The mailing was also sent to previous contacts or individuals that have contacted the Council on salmon bycatch issues, and State legislature and Congressional representatives.

The mailing included a two-page flyer for potential posting in communities. It provided a brief summary of the issue, including bycatch trends, and solicited input from stakeholders identified as being potentially affected by the proposed action. It also provided a summary of the Council's schedule on this issue, methods of contacting the Council, and a website reference to the current suite of alternatives and options. The flyer was intended to inform individuals and communities as to the current stage of the process that the Council is undertaking in December 2009 (i.e., refining alternatives and options and establishing a timeline for analysis). In addition, the flyer noted that pending Council direction in December, it is likely that an outreach plan will be developed for the proposed action, which would likely include regional outreach meetings in rural Alaska, in order to explain the proposed action, provide preliminary analysis, and receive feedback from rural communities.

The Council intends to send a letter and another mailing to the same group of stakeholders, likely prior to the June 2010 Council meeting, as the Council is tentatively scheduled to conduct a final review and possible revision of the proposed alternatives and options for analysis at that meeting. Note that this would be prior to development of an initial review draft analysis. The intent of the mailing would be to ensure awareness of the current Council schedule, including the potential release date of the initial review draft analysis, and to solicit feedback on the alternatives and options to be analyzed. It would also notice the public of any regional outreach meetings that had been planned to date.

Finally, the Council would send a third mailing to the same group of stakeholders prior to the Council meeting at which final action is scheduled (tentatively June 2011, in Nome). The intent of this mailing would be to ensure awareness of the Council's preliminary preferred alternative, the range of impacts

⁴http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/bycatch/salmon/non_chinook/default.htm.

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analyzed, the schedule for final action, and to solicit input on the selection of the final preferred alternative.

Note that the draft analysis (EA/RIR/IRFA), associated documents, outreach materials, and powerpoint presentations, will all be posted on the Council website as the process occurs and prior to the Council's scheduled meeting for final action. In addition, the Council newsletter will report upon progress and relevant meetings. The public is also able to listen to Council meetings real-time via the internet if they cannot attend in person. The Council will also consider a follow-up mailing to potentially affected entities as to the results of the Council's final recommendation for chum salmon bycatch reduction measures to the Secretary of Commerce, if, at that point, the website and Council newsletter are not considered sufficient means to reach potentially affected stakeholders.

Community outreach meetings (late 2010/early 2011)

Timing

The approach for community outreach meetings is to work with established community representatives and Native entities within the affected regions and attend annual or recurring regional meetings, in order to reach a broad group of stakeholders in the affected areas. Working with established entities which have regular in-region meetings tends to reach more stakeholders than if the Council hosted its own outreach meeting in the community. It was determined that Council staff would convene individual outreach meetings only as necessary and appropriate, if a regional meeting was not scheduled in a particular area during a timeframe in which Council staff and/or members could attend sufficiently prior to final action.

While direct mailings to solicit feedback are scheduled prior to the alternatives being finalized, and well before the initial review draft analysis is developed, staff proposes conducting outreach meetings in rural Alaska in order to correspond with regularly scheduled regional meetings *and* the release of an initial analysis, but *prior to* the Council's final action (tentatively scheduled for June 2011). This would allow the public to review and provide comments directly on the first version of the impact analysis, such that changes can be made prior to completion of the final analysis. However, due to concerns with the majority of community outreach occurring later in the analytical process, and the number of regional meetings proposed, this plan proposes a schedule that would start some regional outreach meetings in late 2010 and the remainder in early 2011.

In addition, in order to get feedback prior to the Council's final review of the alternatives (tentatively scheduled for June 2010), this plan proposes to schedule a **teleconference**, using an internet program that allows for staff presentations to be provided on the web real-time, that would create a forum for the public to provide input early in the process. Under the tentative analytical schedule, this teleconference would have to be publicized and scheduled for early 2010. While a draft analysis would not yet be available, staff could present the analytical schedule, important Council meeting dates, chum bycatch trend data to-date, the current suite of alternatives, and information on how to participate in the Council process. The timing of this teleconference, and all outreach efforts, are directly dependent on the analytical schedule and schedule for Council action.

The outreach budget will likely allow for travel to regional meetings in several communities, but not two rounds of meetings in several communities (both prior to the release of the analysis and after). Thus, the plan outlines outreach presentations in eight communities, at regularly scheduled meetings that are intended to reach a broad group of stakeholders. Most of these meetings are in February/March 2011, and an initial review draft analysis would be available prior to the meetings, such that the public can make substantive comments on the impact analysis. The initial review draft analysis is tentatively scheduled for

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release in mid-January 2011, and the Council is scheduled to review that document and choose a preliminary preferred alternative in early February 2011.

Due to the timing of community outreach, the Council may want to consider an alternative schedule as outlined at the end of Section II. The alternative schedule proposes a preliminary review of the analysis in February 2011, outreach meetings in February/March 2011 as noted, and initial review and selection of a PPA at the June 2011 Council meeting in Nome. As stated previously, this would allow several advantages with regard to rural community outreach. The alternative schedule would necessarily delay final action on the analysis until at least October 2011, but would not necessarily affect the implementation date.

List of potential rural outreach meetings

With regard to community and Native outreach meetings, Council staff will consult with the coordinators of five of the Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), the Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), the Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Association (YRDFFA), and the Yukon River Panel, in order to evaluate the potential for time on the agendas of their annual regional meetings. This would encompass potentially 9 outreach meetings, if scheduling is amenable. Staff recognizes that one or more of the following meetings may not be possible, as many of these regional meetings may overlap or occur within the same week. In addition, the February 2011 Council meeting is tentatively scheduled for the first week of February.

In sum, the Council will attempt to schedule outreach on the chum salmon bycatch issue at each of the following regional meetings, should each entity wish to have this issue on its agenda. All of these meetings are open to the public. Note that due to the extended timeframe, the exact dates and locations for most of these meetings have not yet been scheduled.

Association of Village Council Presidents	(Oct 2010; Bethel)
Yukon River Panel	(Dec 5 – 11, 2010; AK)
Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Western Interior Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Bristol Bay Regional Advisory Council	(Feb/Mar 2011)
Tanana Chiefs Conference annual meeting	(Mar 15 – 19, 2011; Fairbanks)
Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Assn annual meeting	(Feb 2011)

In addition to the above regional/community meetings, Council staff may provide presentations at other meetings, as necessary and possible, recognizing that preparing, attending, and following up with outreach meetings requires staff time and funding. The need for outreach meetings must be balanced with the time needed for staff to complete the analysis.

Council member and staff participation

This outreach plan proposes to have one to two Council members attend each regional meeting, with one to two Council staff analysts, including the lead analyst on the project. Primary NMFS staff working on the analysis would also be invited. Council staff would provide presentations on the Council process, outreach efforts, and the proposed action on chum salmon bycatch reduction measures. Council staff and members would be available to answer questions, and staff would document the results of each meeting. In addition to input that can be incorporated into the impact analysis, the results of the outreach meetings

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would be provided to the Council prior to final action in the form of an outreach report (see the *Documenting results* section below).

Coordination with NMFS on tribal consultations

The primary Federal mandate for tribal consultation is Executive Order 13175, which requires executive agencies⁵ to establish regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with Indian tribes⁶ in the development of Federal policies that have tribal implications.⁷ While it is NMFS' legal obligation to undertake formal tribal consultation with Federally-recognized tribes and Native corporations under E.O. 13175, Council staff will coordinate with NMFS, if and when a formal tribal consultation is requested. For example, Council staff could provide an overview or background presentation on the proposed action as part of Council public outreach, and NMFS could conduct the tribal consultation as a separate, private part of that meeting. Council staff/members could participate in the tribal consultation upon request of the tribe, depending upon scheduling.

Additional outreach

The outreach plan also includes: 1) requesting booth space at the Alaska Federation of Natives annual meeting in October 2010; 2) conducting radio interviews for rural community radio stations; and 3) providing information and/or a press release to newspapers in regional hubs.

Documenting results

Council staff will document input provided during the community teleconference (tentatively scheduled for May 2010), and provide that information to the Council at its June 2010 meeting. Note that the Council is scheduled to review and revise the suite of alternatives at the June meeting.

Council staff will also document input provided at the regional meetings, including any public testimony. An outreach report will be prepared to document the outreach process and results of the regional meetings. A short summary of each meeting will be provided in the outreach report as a brief reference. In addition, details of the regional meetings attended, a description of the participants, and the comments provided (by category) will be compiled. Resolutions or motions that result from any of these meetings will be appended to the report.

Note that if initial review of the analysis is scheduled for February 2011, the outreach report documenting community input will be presented to the Council at the next available meeting, which means in conjunction with the public review draft analysis (i.e., Council final action). Council final action is

⁵ Executive Order 13175 (*Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments*) states that for the purpose of the order, 'agency' means any authority of the U.S. that is an 'agency' under 44 U.S.C. 3502(1), other than those considered to be independent regulatory agencies, as defined in 44 U.S.C. 3502(5). In 44 U.S.C. 3502(1): the term "agency" means any executive department, military department, Government corporation, Government controlled corporation, or other establishment in the executive branch of the Government (including the Executive Office of the President), or any independent regulatory agency, but does not include - (A) the General Accounting Office; (B) Federal Election Commission; (C) the governments of the District of Columbia and of the territories and possessions of the United States, and their various subdivisions; or (D) Government-owned contractor-operated facilities, including laboratories engaged in national defense research and production activities.

⁶ "Indian tribe" means an Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community that the Secretary of the Interior acknowledges exists as an Indian tribe pursuant to the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994, 25 U.S.C. 479a. Note that Section 161 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-199), as amended by Section 518 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 (Public Law 108-447), extends the consultation requirements to Alaska Native corporations.

⁷ "Policies that have tribal implications" refers to regulations, legislative comments or proposed legislation, and other policy statements or actions that have substantial direct effects on one or more Indian tribes, on the relationship between the Federal government and Indian tribes, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities between the Federal government and tribes.

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tentatively scheduled for June 2011 in Nome. However, if the Council decides to schedule initial review of the analysis at its June 2011 meeting, the outreach report could be provided to the Council at that meeting, prior to the selection of a preliminary preferred alternative. Under either schedule, the outreach report will also be included in the Secretarial review draft analysis that is submitted to the Secretary of Commerce after the Council makes a final recommendation.