



Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Taskforce REPORT

March 16 and 17, 2021: 8:30am-1:30pm AKDT

Zoom Teleconference

Taskforce members in attendance:

Kate Haapala (Co-chair, NPFMC)	Robert Murphy (APU)	Richard Slats (Chevak)
Sarah Wise (Co-chair, AFSC)	Julie Raymond-Yakoubian	Simeon Swetzof (St. Paul)
Alida Trainor (ADFG)	(Kawerak)	
Rachel Donkersloot (Coastal Cultures Research)	Bridget Mansfield (NMFS)	
	Toby Anungazuk Jr. (Golovin)	

Members absent: Darcy Peter (Beaver)

Others in attendance:

Steve Maclean (NPFMC), Megan Williams (Ocean Conservancy), Lauren Divine (St. Paul), Raychelle Daniel (Pew), Stephanie Madsen (ASPA), Baine Etherton (ADFG), Rose Fosdick (Nome), Mellisa Johnson (Bering Sea Elders Group), Paul Wilkins (CVRF), Mateo Paz-Soldan (St. Paul), Chris Tran (Aleut Community of St Paul island), Natasha Hayden (Afognak Tribal Council and Native Corporation), Jaylene Wheeler (Sitnasuak Native Corporation), Maggie Mooney (AFSC), Carol Oliver (Chinik), Alla Strobel

Introductions and Update

The co-chairs of the Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence (LKTKS) Taskforce opened the meeting with introductions and gave an overview of the agenda. The co-chairs explained the purpose of the meeting, namely that the Taskforce members would discuss and further develop the protocol and onramp recommendations.

The Taskforce reviewed its goals and objectives, and Dr. Kate Haapala provided an update on recent presentations from the co-chairs on the LKTKS Taskforce's work to the Science and Statistical Committee, the Council, and the Social Science Planning Team. Dr. Haapala also provided an update on the Council's action from the February 2021 meeting related to the Community Engagement Committee. The Taskforce discussed the Council's [motion](#) and noted its support for Council staff and the Council to participate in a cultural awareness training and the assigning Rural Fisheries Community/Tribal Liaison responsibilities to staff. Taskforce members agree that assigning Rural Fisheries Community and Tribal Liaison responsibilities to staff is a positive step forward for improving community engagement, relationship building, and potentially better including LK and TK expertise over the long-term. However, some Taskforce members also expressed a preference for liaison responsibilities to be a dedicated, full time position and that existing staff are fully tasked.

Identifying Sources of LKTKS Information

The Taskforce received an update from Dr. Kate Haapala on ongoing work to help Council staff, agency partners, and the public access the social science of LK and TK and subsistence information with a search engine tool. The search engine will allow users to query peer reviewed papers and publicly available reports related to LK, TK, the social science of LK and TK, and subsistence using different key words and search terms.¹ The preliminary list of terms was reviewed by Taskforce members. The Taskforce also identified several potential sources to be included in the search engine, which are compiled in a Masterfile bibliography available [here](#). At this meeting, members agreed additional search terms should be considered including Indigenous stewardship or management, social science, Tribal Consultation, and ecosystem. The next steps for moving this product forward are to develop the software and web-based platforms and coding key words and search terms to the information sources.

The Taskforce also discussed ongoing work to develop a list of ‘Narrative Sources’ of data which includes legal and other guidance documents, metadata, archival materials, oral transcripts, or subsistence maps based on LK and TK expertise. It is important to note that some of these sources may not have undergone academic peer review but may have undergone other types of rigorous peer review and therefore can be considered representative legitimate bodies of information (e.g. marine mammal hunters reviewing maps of marine mammal harvest areas). The presentation organized potential sources around overarching themes: legal and other guidance documents, archives, media, networks, and other. The Taskforce envisions a product that provides a description of the source and gives guidance where appropriate for how to access these information sources. Narrative sources of data are complementary and additive to the published or publicly available works housed in the search engine.

The Taskforce sees these products as achieving Objectives 1 and 4 by providing a means to identify and access sources of LK, TK, the social science of LK and TK, and subsistence information. Additionally, these products are expected to help gauge the usefulness of different protocol elements and reduce the burden Council staff and agency partners face when trying to find potentially new sources of scientific information to inform decision-making.

Protocol Development

At the November 2020 meeting, the Taskforce came to consensus on 12 initial, high-level guidelines. The March 2021 meeting provided an opportunity for the Taskforce to revisit and discuss these 12 guidelines in detail. Because protocol development will be an iterative process, the purpose of this dialogue was to flush out and come to consensus on the most relevant components to each guideline identified in November 2020. The Taskforce reached consensus on important themes, guideline-specific content, and removed or combined other guidelines as needed to avoid redundancy. It was agreed that members may continue to work on the guidelines with each other prior to the next meeting to facilitate progress. This item will be reviewed for consensus next meeting.

Below are the high-level guidelines and some highlights from members’ discussion:

1. Understand key concepts and definitions related to LK, TK, and subsistence

¹ The search engine is responsive to the Council’s [February 2020 motion](#) that directs the Taskforce to identify and define sources of LK and TK, the social science of LK and TK, and subsistence to support the use of best scientific information available in Council decision-making.

- a. The Taskforce has created a [glossary of terms](#) that articulates key concepts like LK, TK, and subsistence and it is a starting point for Council staff, Council members, and agency partners. Taskforce reflections also focused on differences in how LK and TK expertise is identified and vetted by relevant peer groups. For example, there may be more flexibility in identifying LK expertise (while still noting the importance of place-based knowledge, in-situ observations, etc.) than there is for identifying TK expertise.
- b. Taskforce members expressed concern with the notion of setting out “best practices” in relation to any type of data collection in the protocol. Members expressed some apprehension that the protocol could be perceived as, or used as, a tool to “teach non-social scientists how to do social science.” A key theme throughout all the Taskforce’s conversation on the protocol was the need to build non-economic social science capacity at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center and Council staff. It was felt among several members that there could be a risk of diluting the efficacy of social science work if “best practices” were to be put in place in lieu of building expertise among staff. It was agreed the emphasis of the protocol should be placed on *using* LK and TK and Subsistence information that has been collected and or documented by expert knowledge holders and/or social scientists with that expertise.
- c. Additionally, The Taskforce noted that better inclusion of LK, TK, and the social science of LK and TK, will require proactive identification of research gaps and key issues the Council would like more information on. The role of SSPT in this process (including the gap analysis underway) was discussed.

2. Recognize and respect the role of multiple knowledge systems

- a. Under this guideline, Taskforce members had significant discussion around issues of Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Meaningful engagement from individuals holding LK and TK as well as subsistence related knowledge requires an understanding and adherence to FPIC and equity. The protocol will define these terms, but the primary principle is to engage individuals, tribes, communities, associations, and cooperatives in a way that does no harm. There are practical steps that can be observed like obtaining consent for using sensitive information and intellectual property rights. These processes will be different when dealing with different stakeholders (such as fishing associations, cooperatives, and industry) versus sovereign entities such as tribes and tribal governments.
- b. Taskforce members also discussed that respecting multiple knowledge systems (e.g., western science and Traditional Knowledge) requires an understanding that there are diverse legitimate ontologies and that they each have their own unique and important contribution to make.

3. Accessing and using sources of LK, TK, the social science of LK and TK, and subsistence information

- a. Taskforce members decided to combine guidelines 3, 4, and 5 from the November 2020 meeting because each focused on articulating issues of *access* and *use*.
- b. Taskforce members noted the body is working to produce different tools (i.e., search engine and narrative sources of data document) to help Council staff, Council members, agency partners, and the public access LKTKS information.
- c. A key theme emerging from members’ discussion on this guideline is the importance of building relationships with LK and TK holders. Members noted their support for the addition of Rural Fishing Community and Tribal Liaison responsibilities to staff and agree that this person will play a key role in building relationships and helping to include LK and TK into the Council’s process over time.

- d. It is important to recognize that different entities (e.g., tribes, fishing associations, and co-ops) will have different types of information sources, key contacts, and that key contacts may not represent or hold LK and TK. Additionally, one Taskforce member reminded the body that it will be important for the protocol to articulate the differences between accessible tribal contacts like a Tribal Coordinator and Alaska Native Elders or TK experts. In some cases, Tribal Coordinators may be young professionals who do not hold TK and have not been taught subsistence ways of living by Alaska Native Elders.
- 4. Engage in early and frequent communication with all relevant entities (i.e., tribes, fishing associations, local government, co-management bodies, and/or CDQ groups)**
 - a. There was consensus that early communication as well as ongoing communication between the Council and relevant entities will be key for maintaining relationships and accessing different information sources. There was agreement among Taskforce members that the Rural Fishing Community and Tribal Liaison staff member will play a key role in this.
 - b. Under this guideline, the Taskforce also discussed the importance of Tribal Consultations occurring between tribes and the National Marine Fisheries Service noting the agency’s legal obligation as well as the importance of minimizing surprise for tribes and building relationships. Several members of the Taskforce discussed the role of Tribal Consultation as central to engagement. There was some difference made in “Big C - Consultation” (a formal government to government consultation process) and “little c –consultation” (less formal perhaps, but ongoing and bi-directional transparent communication). Consultation in general was described as a necessary tool to help facilitate discussion and communication among federal agencies, pseudo-federal agencies, and tribes. Far from being a negative term associated to conflict, Consultation in any form was seen by some members as a method of furthering dialogue toward mutual understanding and agreement. Consultation in any form can underpin strong and mutually beneficial relationships.
 - 5. Acknowledge difference in opportunities for capacity among relevant entities**
 - a. Taskforce members decided to revise guideline 7 from the November 2020 meeting which emphasized ensuring the presence of appropriate representatives for a given stage of the process. The Taskforce agreed that it would be more appropriate and useful to acknowledge different opportunities for capacity and engagement across entities (e.g., tribes, fishing associations, etc.).
 - b. Under this guideline, Taskforce members discussed the importance of acknowledging limitations in time and resources. For example, tribal governments have full agendas at any point in time. Engaging tribes and their representatives require a consideration of their time, celebrations or ceremonies in villages, and their own prioritization of issues. Other examples include those organizations which may have the capacity for full time staff verses organizations which operate on a smaller scale.
 - c. The Taskforce also discussed the importance of coordination. There are many distinct bodies and issues which overlap. For example, tribes and fishing cooperatives are working with the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, municipalities, Council, and National Marine Fisheries Service on any given issue. Moving forward to better include LK and TK will likely require better coordination on specific issues or actions among these bodies.
 - 6. Be aware of and adhere to the protocols that entities have established for sharing information and making decisions**

- a. Taskforce members decided to combine guidelines 8 and 10 from the November 2020 meeting.
 - b. This guideline is focused on ensuring entities' intellectual property rights and data sovereignty. Entities (e.g., Amendment 80 cooperative versus tribal government) will have different rules for what constitutes sensitive information and their willingness or ability to share it.
 - c. Carrying out this guideline will require Council and agency staff to communicate the risks and benefits of sharing or not sharing information before entering into any agreement. For example, Council and agency staff are subject to FOIA which inherently limits their ability to protect information. All entities should be made aware that, regardless of whether or not information marked as confidential could be redacted, what they have shared could be subject to access by others. The issues of data sovereignty are particularly significant for tribes given specific rights afforded. It is important to recognize that Alaska Native tribal governments and/or holders of TK, as well as holders of LK, can withdraw their participation and information at any point in the process. It is also possible that agreement or disagreement may exist between what tribal governments or a fishing cooperative view as collective intellectual property that an individual member shares, versus what the individual may consider to be his or her own intellectual knowledge and experiences that form the property of that information.
- 7. Ensure appropriate capacity for accessing and using LK, TK, the social science of LK and TK, and subsistence information**
- a. Taskforce members agree that ensuring the appropriate expertise and sufficient labor capacity is a central point to being able to meaningfully include LK, TK, and subsistence expertise or information into the Council process over the long-term.
 - b. Beyond hiring additional non-economic social science expertise on agency or Council staff, the Taskforce noted the importance of considering cultural awareness training, co-production training, and creating interdisciplinary research or analytical teams to provide necessary expertise, proactively developing research priorities related to LK, TK, and subsistence, build enduring partnerships across anchoring institutions and organizations, and expanding Indigenous expertise and representation on staff and across advisory bodies.

Onramps for LK, TK, the Social Science of LK and TK, and Subsistence

The Council directed the LKTKS Taskforce to produce a document that identifies and provides rationale for potential 'onramps,' or points of entry, for LKTKS information into the Council's process. **At its April 2020 meeting, the Taskforce made four initial onramp recommendations:** hiring or training a Tribal Liaison on Council staff, establishing a process for tribal engagement with the Council, creating guidelines for including LKTKS information within Council analyses, particularly Regulatory Impact Reviews and Social Impact Assessments, and expanding LKTKS and social science expertise on existing committees or Plan Teams in the Council's process. **These four recommendations are interdependent and represent the most significant opportunity for building relationships, improving communication, and incorporating LKTKS information across the Council's entire process.**

At the March 2021 meeting, the Taskforce revisited three of its preliminary onramp recommendations and made one additional recommendation. Recall that the Taskforce had an extensive dialogue on the tribal engagement onramp in November 2020.

- a. **Tribal Liaison:** The Taskforce noted its support for the Council and Executive Director assigning Rural Fisheries Community/Tribal Liaison responsibilities to staff. This was seen as a positive step forward for improving community engagement, relationship building, and better including LK and TK expertise. However, Taskforce members also expressed their preference for these responsibilities to be a dedicated, full time position.
- b. **More rigorously including LK, TK, the social science of LK and TK, and subsistence information into analyses:** The Taskforce received a presentation from Ms. Bridget Mansfield (NMFS, NEPA Coordinator) on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the different types of analytical documents produced to support Council decision-making. The Taskforce agreed that LKTKS source of information can enhance NEPA analyses by providing information on the biological and physical dynamics that may inform analyses of impacts on the action on biological and physical environments (i.e., Environmental Assessment) and potential social and economic impacts of the action to communities (i.e., Regulatory Impact Reviews and Social Impact Assessments).

The Taskforce agreed that creating an analytical writing template containing key themes and points of consideration related to LK, TK, and subsistence could be a useful and enduring tool for staff completing NEPA analyses. This template will be fleshed out and taken up next meeting.

Ms. Alida Trainor (ADFG) provided a short update on the Customary and Traditional Use Worksheets which are used by the Board of Fish and Game to support decision-making. Although the Worksheets are typically used for a different purpose, they specify eight concise considerations that could be used as a writing prompt for staff. The Taskforce identified Dr. Bobby Murphy, Dr. Rachel Donkersloot, Dr. Kate Haapala, Dr. Sarah Wise, and Ms. Bridget Mansfield as leads to create and review analytical templates. The Taskforce is aware analytical staff have the discretion to craft analyses in a way they feel provides the Council the best scientific information available (National Standard 2) relevant to the management action. This template is not meant to provide a rigid set of requirements, but rather a starting point to support analytical writing that can be accompanied by the search engine, narrative sources of data, and eventual protocols.

- c. **Increasing LK, TK subsistence or tribal representation on Council advisory bodies.** At the April 2020 meeting, the Taskforce recommended that LK, TK, and subsistence knowledge holders or tribal representatives have better representation among Council advisory bodies. The Taskforce is aware of the requirements set for some bodies such as the Science and Statistical Committee, and the overall nominations process for Plan Teams and committees. The Taskforce received a short presentation from Dr. Kate Haapala outlining five potential advisory bodies as a starting point (the Social Science Planning Team, the Groundfish Plan Team, the Crab Plan Team, the Ecosystem Committee, and the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Team which may be well suited for additional LK, TK, and subsistence knowledge holder or tribal representation.

Rather than selecting specific Plan Teams or committees, the Taskforce agreed it is more appropriate to take a non-prescriptive approach so as to not make assumptions about the capacity or expertise of knowledge holders and tribes, tribal interests, or the ability of different entities to financial support individual's participation. For example, a tribal government may be aware of a member who has LK or TK and is also trained in western scientific methods and meets the membership criteria of the Bering Sea Aleutian Island Groundfish Plan Team and have the

interest and resources to support participation should the Council choose to re-solicit for nominations.

- d. **Systematic inclusion of LK, TK, and subsistence information into Eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Island Ecosystem Status Report (ESR).** The Taskforce received a presentation from Dr. Sarah Wise on the ESRs produced by the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. The ESR have been in development for over 10 years, and recently the authors have taken steps to include Local Knowledge and Traditional Knowledge within the assessments (i.e., related to pollock sightings, seas birds, and northern fur seal pup production). The Taskforce supported including LKTKS into the ESR. The Taskforce recommended the Eastern Bering Sea and Aleutian Island ESRs continue to include LK and TK, and work to develop a systematic framework for synthesis and inclusion into the reports to facilitate sufficient representation and comparability across regions. The Taskforce Protocol in development can provide some guidance to further these efforts. Taskforce members noted this work will require continued relationship building, additional resources, and non-economic social science capacity to achieve this in a consistent and robust way.

Public Testimony

The Taskforce received public testimony from Stephanie Madsen and Mateo Paz Soldan. Ms. Madsen commented on the Taskforce's concern with the notion of best practices in the protocol, noting that the volume and scope of work completed by analytical staff will necessitate non-social scientists working with LK, TK, and subsistence information and supported the effort to create a useful template or process for building relationships. Ms. Madsen also commented on some conversations around LK, noting that place-based knowledge (e.g., Bering Sea) also includes skippers who reside outside of the specific region. Mr. Paz Soldan commented on developing legal frameworks and tools (e.g., the Huffman draft reauthorization of the MSA) which could include funding and other resources to support the inclusion of LK, TK, and subsistence information.