

EM Cooperative Research Conference Call March 26, 2014

Present: Dan Hull (NPFMC), Diana Evans (NPFMC), Martin Loefflad (NMFS AFSC), Farron Wallace (NMFS AFSC), Chris Rilling (NMFS AFSC), Jennifer Mondragon (NMFS SF), Dan Falvey (ALFA), Linda Behnken (ALFA), Howard McElderry (AMR Inc.), Morgan Dyas (SWI), David Polushkin (K-Bay Fisheries), Malcolm Milne (NPFA), Nicole Kimball (ADF&G)

Agenda

1. Field work update (Sitka, Homer, PSMFC, NMFS)
2. Releasing vessels in Track 1 from observer coverage (NMFS)
3. Data review protocols (NMFS)
4. Possible recommendations to NPFMC
 - Formation of Council's EM workgroup
 - Council EM workgroup meeting and tasking prior to June Council meeting
5. Feb EM workshop minutes and Mar 5 telcon minutes

1. Field Work Update

Sitka- Four boats with AMR EM installed have made one or more trips and delivered into Sitka; fifth boat will fish in next month. Systems all working; QA/QC test conducted with good results. Dockside monitoring/rockfish ID conducted by Sitka Sound Science Center. Two boats now finished with SE quota and will deliver subsequent into Yakutat. ALFA working on arranging dockside rockfish ID for Yakutat and will provide Yakutat samplers with dockside sampling protocols.

Homer- Two Saltwater systems have been installed on vessels fishing for halibut and blackcod; one vessel is currently fishing and the other one will begin fishing next week. A third system will be installed on another vessel next week. Homer area fishermen and Saltwater are still looking for two more vessels to volunteer. Stacey Buckelew at Saltwater is contact person for arranging installs in Homer.

Two Saltwater systems are also installed on cod pot boats under NPFA's NFWF grant, one of which is in Adak. A question was asked whether footage reviewed as part of this project by AFSC will be shared with PSMFC for EM cooperative research, and after some discussion AFSC said this could be done.

Linda reported two other vessels that will be fishing in May/June and are interested in taking EM systems, with the intent to be installed in Homer.

AMR building study design, sampling plan and timeline for Track 1.

AFSC- NMFS has drafted an RFP in coordination with PSMFC to hire vessels under contract to carry EM systems and observers (Tracks 2 & 3). Next step is to figure out plant sampling in Astoria (Bornstein plan) and then Kodiak during the summer to develop species identification algorithms for stereo cameras. AFSC is planning to hire an additional staff member to help with this field work.

Dan Falvey asked to be able to review the draft RFPs for Tracks 2 and 3.

2. Releasing vessels in Track 1 from observer coverage

AFSC and NMFS Region office have determined that an RFP is not necessary to release Track 1 vessels from coverage. NMFS has drafted a letter seeking volunteers to participate in the EM cooperative research. Once finalized by NMFS the letter will be shared with the EM workgroup. The letter proposes to release vessels that volunteer from observer coverage for the duration of participation in the cooperative research project (Track 1). Criteria/priorities for selection that were identified in the letter include:

- Are currently in the vessel selection coverage category of the observer program;
- Were previously released from coverage in 2013 or 2014;
- Are 40-57.5 feet in length fishing IFQ quota
- Set up as side hauling vessels;
- EM systems will be installed in Homer, Kodiak, Petersburg, or Sitka, AK

Dan and Linda requested additional criteria to be considered, removal of certain criteria, and posed several questions to be addressed:

- Include previous experience with EM as a criteria
- Remove previously released from coverage in 2013 or 2014
- Remove hook and line gear with side hauling stations
- Remove IFQ quota
- Include trip selection vessels
- Distinguish between criteria and priority
- Will there be a requirement for a certain amount of quota?
- Who would vessels wishing to participate contact in NMFS?
- How will NMFS communicate with vessels that are selected?
- How long will vessels be allowed to carry EM equipment?

There were several discussion points about the letter. AFSC/NMFS clarified that the intent of the letter is to identify certain vessel and operating characteristics that are most desirable for participation in the cooperative research plan. For example, a vessel >57.5' in length could still volunteer and be accepted if no vessels <57.5' volunteered, and/or if the characteristics of the larger vessel make it more desirable than other vessels. The priority characteristics identified in the letter are also consistent with the Council's intent to focus EM development on the fixed gear fleet of IFQ vessels under 57.5'. There was also discussion about the effect broad or narrow vessel and operating characteristics (target species, geographical and temporal, previous EM experience, etc.) could have on the sample of the vessels as a representation of the fleet, and the efficient use of resources in the EM cooperative research plan.

In the end, the group agreed to remove the priority for vessels that haul gear over the vessel side, since there is a need to incorporate stern hauling vessels in the implementation of EM. The letter will outline general characteristics that are a priority. Additional issues discussed by the group such as the experience of the vessel carrying EM equipment, and the amount of IFQ held will also be considered in the selection process, but not prescribed in the letter. The group agreed that this selection process for

release from coverage for Track 1 vessels would be determined in the Council's EM Workgroup. The letter will also include reference to the RFP being a separate process for Tracks 2 & 3 that would financially compensate vessels for carrying both EM and an observer.

Martin agreed to revise the draft letter based on the teleconference discussion and circulate to the group for review.

The question about whether to release vessels that have already been selected for observer coverage in May-June was deferred. NMFS will need to verify whether granting releases for selected vessels will bias the sampling process, and will report back to the workgroup as soon as possible.

Industry representatives expressed extreme disappointment with NMFS' timeline for creating a vessel release process for Track 1 boats. Current volunteers and volunteer boats identified for round 2 installs expected May/June releases were possible and forthcoming—i.e., securing volunteers and providing releases have gone hand in hand and any additional delay will make securing additional volunteers difficult.

3. Data Review Protocols

Martin Loefflad has been working on data collection protocols from last week's meeting in Seattle and will be sharing a spreadsheet with the EM workgroup. Participants at last week's meeting will review and provide edits. The worksheet is a work in progress and will not be presented to Council at April meeting. A project plan and timeline with linkage to Council processes will also be shared with the group. Detailed study designs for all tracks still need to be developed.

Industry indicated the importance of capturing additional detail and decisions from the meeting to ensure an efficient process and to ensure data collected and data sets constructed answer questions important to management decisions. Also identified that overall goal/objective of Tracks 1-3 are the same and should be captured as such in worksheet.

4. Possible Recommendations to the Council

Dan Hull indicated that the Council's EM workgroup to be established is essentially an extension of the current ad hoc working group. He read the February 2014 Council motion establishing the workgroup and its purpose. The workgroup will include EM providers, fishery managers (NMFS, IPHC, AFSC), and industry and report directly to Council. Named alternates for appointed members is an option that several people requested and should be considered to accommodate individual schedules.

Dan Hull also stated that he is considering additional tasking or guiding language for the EM Workgroup, and is thinking about how general vs. how specific it should be. The former might provide more flexibility about what the workgroup discusses, in contrast to being very prescriptive. The Council's tasking for the proposed EM workgroup was very specific. He read an example of four points that have been suggested, and asked the group to think about other ideas:

1. Create and oversee specific industry/agency subworkgroups to develop operational details for each specific EM program where such collaboration is needed.
2. Annual performance review of EM operations (e.g., logistical and operational performance and costs; discard estimation performance, and data processing).
3. Facilitate feedback from agency/Council staff and industry on areas of success and areas of needed improvement in EM monitoring.
4. Review proposed EM work for the upcoming year.

Additional industry suggestions for tasking the Workgroup included:

1. Evaluating different approaches for integrating EM;
2. Reviewing and refining EM sampling plans and assumptions to secure data to inform Council decision points;
3. A process to synthesize all 3 research tracks into a timeline, milestones, roadmap document for council review and action by June 2014.

Dan Hull identified several issues discussed on this teleconference that could be included on the first EM Workgroup agenda: incorporating pot gear vessels into 2015 research; the selection process for releasing Track 1 vessels from observer coverage; and cooperative research planning through 2015.

The group discussed the need for the Council's EM workgroup to meet prior to June Council meeting and identified early May as the best time. The OAC is meeting towards the end of May to review the first annual report of the Observer Program, and it is desirable not to hold the EM Workgroup meeting too close to it.

5. Minutes from previous meetings

The March 5th meeting minutes were approved and finalized as written.

February meeting minutes—following issues were discussed and a resolution process identified:

- 1) Participants agreed to include in minutes that EM Cooperative Research would extend into spring 2015. Dan Hull to develop language.
- 2) Industry supported including language provided by AMR relative to ability to upgrade/change technology in an operational EM program. AFSC to review language provided by AMR and respond to Dan Hull.
- 3) Dockside monitoring- minutes should indicate that dockside monitoring was discussed but no agreement reached on process, only that dockside monitoring of Track 1 deliveries should be kept "on the table" and developed in a subsequent meeting.
- 4) Participants agreed to attach to minutes the EM Track 1 document reviewed by the workgroup in Juneau with track changes indicating additions/deletions/modifications adopted by workgroup.

- 5) Participants agreed to review language distributed by ALFA and determine if minutes should state that Juneau workshop participants “discussed” or “agreed to” assembling comprehensive strawman for a various EM approaches. Decisions to be reported to Dan Hull.

Dan Hull will send the revised EM Workshop minutes to the group, and once completed, they will be forwarded, along with the EM Track 1 document and the March 5 minutes, to everyone.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00.