



## Social Science Planning Team REPORT

November 3, 2023, 8:30am – 4:30pm AKT; online meeting

*The Social Science Planning Team met to consider and recommend top Research Priorities. All meeting materials are available on the [eAgenda](#) for the meeting.*

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Committee Members in attendance:

Sarah Wise (AFSC; <i>co-chair</i> )	Mike Downs (SSC; <i>co-chair</i> )	Sarah Marrinan (NPFMC; <i>coordinator</i> )
Caroline Brown (ADF&G)	Seth Macinko (former SSC)	Courtney Carothers (UAF)
Scott Miller (NMFS)	Sam Cunningham (NPFMC)	Mike Fey (AKFIN)
Marysia Szymokowiak (AFSC)		

Members absent: Kate Haapala (NPFMC)

Others in attendance:

Nicole Watson (NPFMC)	Mateo Paz-Soldan (City of St Paul)	Brenden Raymond-Yakoubian (Kawerak, Inc)
Stephanie Madsen (APA)	Loretta Brown (SalmonState)	Rachel Donkersloot (Coastal Cultures Research)
Jeff Kauffman (CBSFA)		

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## Introduction and Updates

Co-chair Mike Downs called the meeting to order and led introductions. He reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

Co-chair Sarah Wise and other members provided updates for the group:

- The Council adopted the Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence (LKTKS) protocol in full during the October Council meeting as well as nine of the eleven suggested ‘on-ramps’. This is available to see on the NPFMC website.<sup>1</sup>
- NMFS is amending their Seafood Strategy including more economic considerations as well as acknowledging the importance of subsistence within the Seafood Strategy.
- The National Academies of Sciences Engineering and Medicine have been working on more topics that may be relevant to the SSPT. This includes a recent study evaluating the data and information available to assess the equitability of the distribution of benefits from federally managed fisheries.<sup>2</sup> A report on this topic is expected early 2024. Another study in development focuses on co-production of environmental knowledge, methods, and approaches.<sup>3</sup> This study will incorporate information gathered from a series of workshop, including one in Anchorage, AK October 23-24, 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> [Link](#) to LKTKS Policy Statement and Protocol.

<sup>2</sup> [Link](#) to NASEM description for study Assessing Equity in the Distribution of Fisheries Management Benefits.

<sup>3</sup> [Link](#) to NASEM description for study on Co-Production of Environmental Knowledge, Methods and Approaches.

- The National NMFS effort to develop an Equity and Environmental Justice (EEJ) Strategy is ongoing.<sup>4</sup> Each regional Science Center is working on developing their own strategy as well.
- It was also noted that the Final Rule implementing the changes to the Economic Data Reports (EDR) was published on 2/6/2023 and became effective on 3/8/2023 (88 FR 7586). Therefore, this year represents the first round of reporting under which these changes will take effect. The SSPT participated in the process to recommend the amendments to this program.

## Research Priority Review and Discussion

Next, Nicole Watson (NPFMC analyst) provided a presentation about the current planned process for consideration of 2024 Research Priorities, including the process before the SSPT at this meeting. She highlighted that the objectives for the SSPT were to:

- Review submissions relevant to the SSPT (new and previous),
- Review Plan Team member submissions,
- Receive public testimony,
- Determine Plan Team top 3-5 research priorities to send to SSC,
- (Optional) Provide a list of additional priorities seen as important but not included in the top 3-5. Please no more than 10,
- Also document methods at how the team arrived at their top 3-5 list, and
- Recommend any future improvements.

Nicole laid out the plan for this meeting and identified all the resources available on this topic. She reminded the group that the Magnuson-Stevens Act requires Councils to identify 5-year research priorities for fisheries, fisheries interactions, habitat and other areas of research that are necessary for management purposes. Research Priorities are selected based on how well they align with or inform management for the federal fisheries the Council manages.

In this current process, Plan Teams are acting as ‘filter’ meetings to give additional attention to the Research Priorities that fit within the Plan Teams’ areas of expertise. This process is intended to provide more transparency and additional opportunity for public input. These 3-5 recommendations from each group will be forwarded to the SSC. The SSC will give further consideration and identify top 8-10 priorities. The Council will consider these recommendations and identify the final 8-10 list. **The SSC and Council review will occur at the April 2024 meeting.**

Sarah Marrinan screen-shared the Excel spreadsheet of 31 existing research priorities which include elements related to human dimensions, and which the SSPT members were asked to review prior to the meeting. The group walked through each existing priority. **Attached is a table of all the Research Priorities reviewed by the SSPT which includes notes and suggested language changes from the SSPT.** Initially (through Research ID #179), members had more in-depth discussion about each priority, including its merit, the status of ongoing research related to the description, and the way the Research Priority was described. Given the level of discussion that could occur around each priority and the need to address the objectives requested of the SSPT, the group refocused the discussion specifically around any suggested language change for the existing Research Priorities.

Next, the group walked through the list of 9 new submissions from the public that had human dimensions components and the 3 new priorities submitted by SSPT members. **Additional comments for the newly suggested Research Priorities are included in the attached table.** It was noted that some of the newly

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<sup>4</sup> [Link](#) to NOAA Fisheries EEJ Strategy.

suggested priorities (e.g., N047d on the incorporation of Traditional Knowledge, SSPT001 assessment of equity in the distribution of fishery management benefits, and SSPT003 on the assessment of Tribal Nation reliance on, participation in, and impacts of federally managed fisheries) were suggested as stand-alone Research Priorities; however, these areas of focus should be a component or dimension of all Research Priorities to support Council’s decision-making process.

**Public comment** was received by Mateo Paz-Soldon (City of St Paul) stating his appreciation for the SSPT’s work to support the social, cultural, and economic dimensions in Research Priorities as they may affect future Council actions.

Members each had the opportunity to speak to priorities that constitute their own top priorities. The rationale provided by members is included in support of the SSPT’s top choices below.

Additional **public comment** was received by Brenden Raymond-Yakoubian (Kawerak, Inc.) on the LKTKS Taskforce’s work, its products and applicability. He noted that it is Kawerak’s view that the Council’s adoption of the LKTKS Protocol signals broad acceptance of its ideas for the Council process. Brenden stressed that while regional considerations and tweaks would be appropriate in working with TK in other regions, much of the guidance and work done through the BS FEP Taskforce can be generally applied when advancing LKTKS work in other regions. They would not want to see delay in meaningful effort in other regions because they didn’t have their own LKTKS Taskforce and a Protocol specifically designed for those regions. He stated that Kawerak would advocate for that application in a preamble to any Research Priority selections that are made. Kawerak also supports language change to priorities that reference ‘socio-economic’ to instead jointly but distinctly identify the need for *social, cultural, and economic* data, information, and or research.

## Identification of SSPT’s Top Research Priorities

Following discussion, members used an online rank-choice voting tool (RCV123.org) for identifying the SSPTs top 5 priorities. In order to populate the ballot for this tool, each member emailed the Research ID # for their own 3-5 top choices. This would include choices from Kate and Seth who were unable to attend this part of the meeting, but who provided their choices ahead of time. Nicole and Sarah Marrinan collated all of the submitted numbers into one list. **Of the total 43 research priorities considered by the SSPT (including new and existing submissions), the ballot was comprised of 16 top choices.** From those 16 top choices, members ranked their top 5. The following table demonstrates the results of this voting.

**The SSPT's top 5 Research Priorities and rationale:**

<b>Tied for 1<sup>st</sup>:</b>	
	<b>Research ID #230</b> - Examine social and economic interactions between coastal communities and commercial and recreational fisheries.
<b>Rationale in support:</b>	
Research Priority #230 is broad language that could focus research around better characterizing both economic dimensions and other social dimensions in fishery communities (social cohesion, operational diversity community resilience, etc.) While this would help describe current dynamics it could also be used in decision-making by helping to establish the baseline for action analyses.	
	<b>Research ID #N037D</b> - Traditional Knowledge: There are numerous ways Traditional Knowledge will strengthen all Research Priorities, including offering new frameworks for analysis; fostering relationships between Indigenous and Western scientific researchers and communities; and filling gaps in existing ecological and social scientific research.
<b>Rationale in support:</b>	
The identification of #N037D as a top Research Priority forward is in alignment with the recognition of Tribal sovereignty and importance of working with Tribal governments to bring the best scientific information available (not just Western science) in a way that is not extractive. It supports national initiatives to strengthen Tribal consultation and government relationships which extends to the research. This work can help management move away from the concept of attempting to assimilate TK into Western paradigms. This is in alignment with the two recent NAS consensus studies including co-production workshops and other national efforts towards better incorporation of TK.	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup>:</b>	<b>Research ID #SSPT003</b> - Document and assess Tribal citizen and Tribal Nation reliance on, participation in, and impacts of federally managed fisheries (historically and throughout time)
<b>Rationale in support:</b>	
This Research Priority has some overlap with the additionally important Research Priority # SSPT001 on the assessment of equity in the distribution of fishery management benefits, but in particular it is more specifically focused around Tribal citizen and Tribal Nations. In particular, with national priorities to elevate and strengthen Tribal Consultation and Collaboration, Federal Trust Responsibility, inclusion of Indigenous knowledge systems, and racial equity in federal fisheries, and with 229 Tribal Nations in Alaska there is a lot of work that needs to be responsive to these national priorities. This is also one of the identified data gaps in the SSPT's ongoing Data Gap analysis.	
<b>Tied for 3<sup>rd</sup>:</b>	
	<b>Research ID #165</b> – <i>suggested title change to:</i> 'Conduct routine surveys of subsistence uses of resources in communities across the Bering Sea, northern Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean'
<b>Rationale in support:</b>	
Research Priority #165 was a top priority with the suggested title change. Regular and solid collection of information on subsistence uses of resources in communities across the Bering Sea, northern Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean would be an essential part of monitoring and understanding the rapidly changing environment and the human response. There is a dearth of this information and these data would help respond to MSA requirements for fishery disasters. This effort could be advanced through a co-production approach (working with Tribes and Tribal organizations) to think about how to best conduct this type of data collection. It could be linked with goals for LKTKS work. Would contribute to SIAs and help to address National Standard 8 for actions related to this area. Also, members liked that this was not so broad that it could lose the desired focus.	
	<b>Research ID #731</b> - Norton Sound Red King Crab case study
<b>Rationale in support:</b>	
Research Priority #731 may represent a significant example of work that can be done to bring together climate change information, LKTKS, Western science, etc. to work to address a locally important crab fishery that has seen substantial stock declines.	

This represents work that the SSC has recommended annually since 2018, but COVID derailed some of the work. This fishery has multiple community protection measures built in and the efficacy of these measures may not have been analyzed. This fishery has seen declines in stock status, but local harvesters depend on it to support subsistence, as well as a summer and winter commercial fishery. These communities are primarily indigenous and tribes in the area have been supportive of the initiative to incorporate more LKTKS information. This would be in line with the recently adopted LKTKS protocol.

### **Special Mention and Ballot List**

**Research Priority #611** did not make into the SSPT's top 5 list from rank choice voting; however, this priority (with the changes described in the attached table, including recommendations from N039c) did receive the most ranked votes from SSPT members that ranked their top 5. This is a broad Research Priority around the importance of collecting social and cultural information that can be used in management. As described in the table, it is recommended this is expanded to include subsistence fisheries, as well as information shared through Tribal Consultation and other informal means, to support the development of SIAs. Several members expressed their support for this priority.

In addition, the 16 Research Priorities that made it to the ballot were all within members' top 3-5 choices. Additional support for these priorities is captured in the attached table. In addition to the 6 specified above, these included the following (listed in numerical order, not ranked):

**Research ID #178:** Develop a framework and collect economic information.

**Research ID #179:** Conduct pre- and post-implementation studies of the benefits and costs, and their distribution, associated with dedicated access privileges.

**Research ID #226:** (*suggested title change*) Monitor the economic, social, and cultural effects from fishery policy changes on coastal communities.

**Research ID #365:** Retrospective analysis of the impact of Chinook PSC avoidance measures on communities of western Alaska.

**Research ID #431:** Develop tools for analyzing coastal community vulnerability to fisheries management changes.

**Research ID #714:** (*suggested title change*) Evaluate impacts on Northern Bering Sea communities, commercial fishermen, and shore-based processing facilities from climate impacts, for example Pacific cod and pollock shifts northward.

**Research ID #N020:** Identify pathways and other opportunities for fishermen and communities to diversify and adapt in the face of climate-driven changes to fisheries (e.g., Bering Sea crab crashes).

**Research ID #N032:** Retrospective analysis of whether and how social science is or is not used regarding predictions of changed fishing behavior in light of proposed changes to management structures.

**Research ID #SSPT001:** Assessing equity in the distribution of fishery management benefits.

**Research ID #SSPT002:** Regional Economic Impact Modelling

### **Next Steps**

The group had a short discussion of next steps. Sarah Marrinan described sentiment members have previously expressed on next steps for the group. Members continue to express support for the mission of

the group and feel that there is still work to be done in achieving the groups' mission.<sup>5</sup> There have been concerns raised about how to be most productive with this time together given other work obligations and what level of commitment should be expected (number of meetings, outside work, etc.). It was noted that members find value in having space for broad interdisciplinary discussion. There were questions about what we'd be asking from the Council to be success in the mission (i.e., clear direction vs us providing examples of what could be accomplished).

Mike Downs highlighted all the work that had been done on the Data Gaps Analysis and the interest in completing that project so the document could be public. This project will require commitment from all and at least one member to lead the effort. At this point, we are looking for volunteers in leading that effort.

Mike Downs suggested following up with an additional meeting on next steps some time in early 2024. In terms of moving forward, members were asking to consider the groups' mission statement and what they think the group could accomplish in the next year or two.

Additionally, it was noted the group currently has less economic representation so it may consider soliciting membership.

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<sup>5</sup> Link to SSPT mission statement: <https://www.npfmc.org/about-the-council/plan-teams/social-science-planning/>