

North Pacific Fishery Management Council Ecosystem Workshop

April 2022 (Tentatively)

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council will consider holding a two-day State of the Ecosystem Workshop in 2022, likely in association with the Council's April 2022 meeting in Anchorage, AK. The workshop is intended to be the second in the ecosystem workshop series that was initiated in February 2018 in Seattle, WA. The first workshop focused on the state of western scientific climate change modeling and understanding. This second workshop is intended to focus on the varying perspectives of ecosystem changes and how those changes affect fishery dependent communities, subsistence activities and resources, and other parts of the marine ecosystems.

The workshop agenda, schedule, and other materials will be made available through the Council's website as they are developed and approved by the Council.

What is the theme of the workshop?

The draft theme of the workshop, that has been suggested by the steering group is "Sharing Perspectives of a Changing Ocean Climate". The theme is intended to invite discussion from multiple perspectives, including traditional and local knowledge, western science, and other perspectives, on the climate-related changes occurring in the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, and Arctic Ocean.

What are the goals of the workshop?

Building upon the recommendations from the Council's Community Engagement Committee (CEC) the goals of the workshop are to:

1. Increase knowledge of both western and local and traditional knowledge of the state of the ecosystem.
2. Build relationships between scientists, traditional and local knowledge holders, industry members, and the Council.
3. Share information about the Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska, and Arctic ecosystems.
4. Increase ongoing opportunities for communication about the state of these larger marine ecosystems.

The second state of the ecosystem workshop has two related goals – bringing together people with different perspectives and knowledge systems to share information about observation of large marine ecosystems and to build relationships with each other. It is hoped that participation will be diverse and include people not necessarily familiar with the Council's process. The Council is committed to treating information sensitively and appropriately, including appropriate discussion of risks of participation and ownership of data and information presented.

What is the structure of the workshop?

Following the structure of the first ecosystem workshop held in February 2018, the structure of the workshop will include a balance of plenary presentations, small-group breakout sessions, and large group discussions. The primary focus will be on the small group discussions because previous showed they had the greatest value to many of the participants. Presentations will build the attendees understanding of traditional and local knowledge, and western scientific understanding of the state of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska, and Arctic marine ecosystems of Alaska.

Who will attend, and how can the public participate?

The workshop is intended to be an in-person workshop. That intention will be influenced by the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and the eventual return to in-person Council meetings. The steering group felt strongly that the workshop must be in-person rather than virtual, or online, if the pandemic recovery stalls, the workshop would be delayed until such time as in-person meetings are allowed and appropriate.

The primary audience for the workshop includes members of the Council and its advisory bodies (SSC, AP, committees) and others with knowledge of or interest in the state of the marine ecosystems of Alaska. The workshop will prioritize discussion between the Council and its advisory bodies, and holders of ecosystem traditional, local, and western scientific knowledge. Opportunities for public input will be provided throughout the workshop.

The workshop plenary presentations may be broadcast over the web for listen-only participation. Breakout sessions and small group discussions will not be broadcast.

What are the expected outcomes or next steps?

The ecosystem workshop is anticipated to be the second in a series of workshops designed to bring Council members, fishing industry members, rural and Alaska Native community members, scientists, and the public together to share perspectives, information, concerns, and ideas to address ecosystem and climate changes in the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, and Arctic ecosystems. A report from the workshop will be prepared and presented to the Council and public. However, the steering group hopes that the primary outcome will be the relationships that are created and strengthened by bringing people with differing perspectives together.

Who is planning the workshop?

The State of the Ecosystem workshop is a Council initiative. The Council approved a workshop steering group to develop the theme, goals, and format for the workshop. The steering group is composed of three members of the Ecosystem Committee, and **three members from rural Alaska appointed by the Council chair.**