

Synthesis of Bering Sea FEP considerations

Lessons learned from AI FEP

- Engaging in the process of synthesizing ecosystem information was useful because such a synthesis did not already exist
 - Considered the cumulative perspective - all fisheries (multiple FMPs and State fisheries), and non-fishing activities
 - Identified key ecosystem processes from fishery management perspective (focus species, key interactions to monitor, qualitative risk assessment); basis for further AFSC work in the EcoSAFE
- Valuable as a science communication tool
- Effective in highlighting AI as a different ecosystem than BS – has been used to support some management analyses
- To have continuing use, needed to have a clear pathway for FEP information to feed into the Council process
 - What is the objective of the FEP for fishery managers?
 - How will it be used in the current fishery management process, or how will it change the process?
 - Consider the intended time frame for FEP information – will resources be available and prioritized to keep it updated and useful?

Potential value of a Bering Sea FEP *(as articulated at Feb 2014 Council meeting)*

- Identifies most relevant BS ecosystem characteristics from a fishery management perspective
 - Questions most relevant for the Council may not be the same as other agencies engaging in BS research or synthesis
- Science communication tool
- Sets up a framework for considering policy choices and tradeoffs affecting FMP species and the ecosystem
 - Resiliency of Council management strategies, and options for responding to changing circumstances (e.g., climate change scenarios, changes in shipping patterns, etc.)
 - Evaluation of management tradeoffs – among fisheries, or with other activities
- Transparent public process for Council to identify ecosystem values and management responses

Other factors to consider

- Geographical scope. The Ecosystem Committee/ Council tentatively indicated it should be the LME (minus the Aleutian Islands), but also acknowledged the scope should be responsive to the Council's FEP objectives
- How to incorporate outreach and public involvement
- Resources and staff time available to develop and update an FEP

Questions for the Ecosystem Committee

- What is the primary objective for developing a BS FEP? What are secondary objectives?
- Should the BS FEP be a document? Or is its value more as a planning process? Does it have any management authority? How does it interact with the FMPs? What is its relationship with the annual EcoSAFE? How does it get used by the Council? How does it stay current/relevant?