

Joint NPFMC / IPHC Meeting

June 7, 2017, Juneau, AK

Agenda Item 4: Progress reports On Council Research and Management Priorities

4g. Social Science Planning Team

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (Council) has tasked a select group of staff and Scientific & Statistical Committee (SSC) representatives to define a standing advisory body that would facilitate and enhance the use of social science data in the management process – the Social Science Planning Team (SSPT). For the purposes of the SSPT, the social science fields include anthropology, sociology, economics, and human geography. The SSPT will only be formed upon the Council’s recommendation at this June 2017 meeting. The working group of Council staff, NMFS AKRO staff, Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) staff, and SSC representatives have offered the following **draft mission statement**:

The Social Science Planning Team (SSPT) is established to improve the quality and application of social science data that informs management decision-making and program evaluation. The SSPT is constituted of representatives who will strategize medium- and long-term improvements in data collection and analytical methodology, allowing the NPFMC to better meet its own program objectives as well as LAPP review requirements defined in the Magnuson-Stevens Act and recommended in NMFS guidelines. The SSPT will identify data needs, make recommendations regarding research priorities, and advise analysts in efforts to improve analytical frameworks when possible. The SSPT will support the collection and aggregation of social science data in a manner that cuts across Fishery Management Plans and specific management programs within the North Pacific region.

The core functions of the SSPT would include the following:

- Identify deficiencies in collected social science data; recommend priority of need to address gaps
- Review existing data sets in regard to their quality and utilization (or underutilization) in analyses
- Recommend revisions to data collections where possible, recognizing that the Council does not directly administer all relevant social science data collection efforts
- Establish analytical “best practices”
- Support staff with advice and feedback on analytical strategy and methodology during the planning stages of complex projects and LAPP reviews, as requested by staff and when befitting the project development timeline
- Maintain an understanding of current and ongoing social science research in areas relevant to North Pacific fisheries management; serve as a network that makes newly developed resources accessible to the Council process through a variety of means
- Provide feedback on AFSC’s annual research proposals, as allowed by timing of RFP
- Provide feedback on Council’s research priorities in the form of comments channeled to the SSC

Membership would consist of affiliates of public organizations and academic institutions, including but not limited to those listed in the draft mission statement. SSPT meetings would be held in-person once annually, open to the public, and noticed in the Federal Register. Meeting minutes and/or progress summaries will be presented to the Council and its SSC by the SSPT chair or a designee, also on an annual basis. The working group has suggested that the annual meeting take place on or about the month of May, which fits best with the Council’s annual meeting schedule, university academic calendars, summer fieldwork plans, and AFSC’s human dimensions research proposal review timeline.