


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members  
FROM: Chris Oliver   
Executive Director  
DATE: January 27, 2009  
SUBJECT: Arctic FMP

ESTIMATED TIME 2 HOURS
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**ACTION REQUIRED**

Receive draft Arctic FMP and draft EA/RIR/IRFA and take action as necessary.

**BACKGROUND**

A. 2008 Beaufort Sea Fish Survey

In 2008, the Alaska Fisheries Science Center (AFSC) conducted a trawl and hydroacoustic survey of a portion of the western Beaufort Sea offshore Alaska to collect information on fish and other marine biota (see map of sampling area, Item C-2(a)). Supported by the Minerals Management Service, this is the first survey of offshore Beaufort Sea fish resources since the 1980s and is an important new data set that was used to support development of the Council's proposed Arctic Fishery Management Plan. The 2008 survey is the first quantitative assessment of fish in the Alaskan Arctic using contemporary stock assessment techniques. It also is an important baseline against which scientists can measure future environmental change in the Arctic. The AFSC report was previously sent to you in a Council mailing. Dr. Libby Logerwell from the AFSC will present an overview of the study and results.

B. Arctic FMP

At its October 2008 meeting, the Council, SSC, AP, and Ecosystem and Enforcement Committees reviewed the preliminary draft Arctic Fishery Management Plan (FMP) and accompanying draft EA/RIR/IRFA. During the October 2008 meeting, the Council requested that staff address all comments to the extent possible by the end of October, and meet with the SSC in December 2008 to further discuss the Arctic FMP and remaining SSC concerns. The Council requested that, once the SSC's December 2008 comments have been addressed, the draft FMP and EA/RIR/IRFA be sent out for public review. The draft Arctic FMP documents were again reviewed with the SSC in December; the SSC concluded that the documents were ready for public review after addressing some additional SSC concerns (an excerpt from the December 2008 SSC meeting minutes is attached as Item C-2(b)).

Since that time, staffs have continued to work on the Arctic FMP documents, including coordination with Alaska Fisheries Science Center staff to update the database used to inform the development of Options 1, 2, and 3 for setting conservation and management measures and to address the remaining SSC comments. The public review draft Arctic FMP and EA/RIR/IRFA was sent out for public review on

January 12-13, 2009, and sent to you in a Council mailing. The Council is scheduled to pick its preferred alternative and take final action to adopt the Arctic FMP at its February 2009 meeting. The Executive Summaries of the draft FMP and the draft EA/RIR/IRFA and a map of the Arctic Management Area are attached as Item C-2(c).

Staff recommends revising the language of the statement of policy and goals and management objectives as a replacement for that section in the draft FMP. The recommended statement is attached as Item C-2(d). This language is clearer and more Arctic-focused but does not change intent.