



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

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Dan Hull, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

Executive Director's Report

(including updates on the social science planning team, CCC meeting, and legislation)

New Council Staff

I am happy to introduce Nicole Schmidt, who is taking over as the Council's Finance Officer and who will also be working on general Council administrative responsibilities. Nicole graduated from UAA with a double major in Business Management and Marketing, and has over 10 years' experience in accounting, office management, and human resources. She started with us in May and has been working with Joy Stein to effect a smooth transition to this important position on our staff. Our biennial financial audit was conducted in May, so Nicole was able to participate with Joy in that process as well. That audit report will be presented to the Council in October. She will also be serving in Shannon's role here at the Council meeting, while Shannon is away on maternity leave. Welcome aboard Nicole!

Plan Team Nominations

Since our last meeting we have received several nominations to fill vacancies on the following Plan Teams (nomination letters and resumes **attached**):

From NOAA Fisheries HQ, Dr. Teresa A'mar to the Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team, to follow up on the one-year appointment in 2016 of Dr. Patrick Lynch. Dr. A'mar brings a wealth of experience to the Plan Team as an Operations Research Analyst, and is one of three members of the National Stock Assessment Program's modeling team which focuses on the quantitative tools used to conduct stock assessments and provides a professional software development service for the agency. She also serves on the agency's Assessment Methods Working Group and the Management Strategy Evaluation Working Group. Dr. A'mar is currently stationed at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center.

The NMFS Alaska Region has nominated Mr. John Olson to the Scallop Plan Team to replace Peggy Murphy who has retired from the agency. John is a Marine Habitat Resource Specialist, and we all know him through his work on habitat issues in the Alaska region, as a fishery biologist and GIS specialist.

The State of Alaska has nominated Mr. Mike Byerly to the Council's Scallop Plan Team to replace Ken Goldman. Mike is a Fisheries Biologist in the Division of Commercial Fisheries, and is responsible for coordinating and participating in numerous fisheries surveys in Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound, and Kodiak management areas.

The State of Alaska has also nominated Mr. Nathaniel Nichols to the Council's Gulf of Alaska Groundfish Plan Team to replace Mark Stichert. Nat is now the Kodiak, Chignik, and South Alaska Peninsula Groundfish/Shellfish Area Management Biologist within the Division of Commercial Fisheries.

The NMFS Alaska Region has nominated Ms. Krista Milani to the BSAI Crab Plan Team, to replace Gretchen

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Harrington. Krista has relevant experience in the crab fisheries and inseason management, having served as a Biologist with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game from 2002 to 2009.

Social Science Planning Team

Following from previous SSC and Council discussions, Council staff committed to organizing an internal working group to develop a 'strawman' terms of reference (TOR) for a potential Social Science 'Plan (or Planning) Team' for Council consideration. The desire for such a group was expressed by the SSC in the context of the Crab Rationalization 10-year review (and in previous reviews), where they suggested the possibility of establishing such a team, in order to "...*discuss program evaluation strategies, refinements in data collection, and analytical methods*". Subsequent discussions suggested a broader scope for such a team, to address general socio-economic data and analytical issues applicable to not only specific program reviews, but other Council initiatives as well. Relevant to these discussions, the AFSC held a workshop last June to discuss the development of a Human Dimensions SAFE document, which has informed the internal working group's development of a strawman for Council consideration.

Throughout April and May an internal working group developed a 'strawman' for Council consideration at this meeting (**attached**). At this time, the internal working group consists of Sam Cunningham (Council staff and workgroup lead), Sarah Marrinan (Council staff), Seth Macinko (SSC), Matt Reimer (SSC), Steve Kasperski (AFSC), Rachel Baker (NMFS), and Marysia Szymkowiak (PSMFC). The SSC will also be reviewing this document and will provide their recommendations to the Council this week. The draft document addresses the background to this initiative, and proposes a mission statement, scope, membership, organization, and meeting format.

Fishing Families Workshop

The Alaska Fisheries Science Center is hosting workshop this week to discuss the interactions of fishing families and changing regulations, environments, and socioeconomic conditions in Alaska's fisheries and fishing communities. This workshop will be a scoping meeting for this research area, and participants will be critical to informing the researchers about what issues are most important. The perspectives on fishing family dynamics that emerge from the workshop will inform the next phase of this research. All participants in Alaska's fisheries with experience or knowledge of fishing family dynamics are welcome and encouraged to attend. The workshop will be Friday, June 9, in Ballroom 3 starting about 5:15 pm. A flyer produced by the AFSC with additional details is **attached**.

Final Catch Share Program Review Guidance

In April NOAA Fisheries issued its final guidance for review of catch share programs (CSPs). A catch share program is a generic term used to describe fishery management programs that allocate a specific percentage of the total allowable fishery catch or a specific fishing area to individuals, cooperatives, communities, or other entities. We commented extensively on earlier, draft versions of this guidance, and many of our concerns have been addressed to varying degrees. In combination with statutory (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requirements for Limited Access Privilege Programs (LAPPs), and the allocation review Policy Directive issued earlier this year, all 'catch share' programs are now subject to review requirements. The **attached** guidance is intended to provide for some consistency across regions and programs, but is also intended to allow some flexibility due to the varying nature of CSP design across different fisheries. The guidance is not significantly inconsistent with the approach we have already taken in the North Pacific with the statutory review of many of our existing LAPPs, and in fact appears to apply most of the statutory review requirements to non-LAPP CSPs. While many of our concerns were addressed in the final guidance, I would encourage the Council (and NMFS) not to underestimate the significant workload implications of these collective program review requirements.

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Saint Paul Outreach

As previously discussed and recommended by the Council, and at the invitation of the City of Saint Paul, we have organized an outreach trip to Saint Paul Island later this month. Council members (Tweit, Hyder, and Cotten), along with staff members (Armstrong, Cunningham, Evans, MacLean, Marrinan, and Stram) will participate in this effort spanning June 23-28. Various community activities are planned for the 24th and 25th, with public meetings scheduled for Sunday through Tuesday. Steve Maclean is the lead Council staff for organizing this trip and he is the contact for additional details and specific meeting times.

Frontiers of Marine Science publication

Attached is a paper authored by Steve MacLean (coauthors are Mike Sigler and Chris Rooper) title "Corals, Canyons, and Conservation: Science Based Fisheries Management Decisions in the Eastern Bering Sea". This paper was recently published in the journal Frontiers of Marine Science, and chronicles the Council's lengthy and intensive examination of coral protections in the eastern Bering Sea slope and canyon areas. Congratulations Steve, Mike, and Chris - well done!

Council Coordination Committee and Legislative Update

The Council Coordination Committee (leadership of the eight Councils and NOAA Fisheries) met during the week of May 15-19 in Gloucester, Massachusetts, hosted by the New England Fishery Management Council. For your reference, the agenda for that meeting is **attached**.

Regarding budget issues, nothing has changed relative to our FY2017 funding, but the President's proposed 2018 budget includes significant reductions across NOAA (including NMFS), and the Council's line item would be reduced by about 4% (or about 170k for our Council).

We discussed the conflict of interest and recusal issues once again, highlighting our April recusal issue regarding Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), particularly the interpretation with regard to "*A Council decision shall be considered to have a significant and predictable effect on a financial interest if there is a close causal link between the Council decision and an expected and substantially disproportionate benefit to the financial interest of the affected individual...*". NOAA GC representatives at the CCC meeting committed to reviewing this determination in light of the concerns we expressed. They are also open to written comment from the Council(s) through the month of June. The associated policy and procedural directives for this issue are **attached**.

We also discussed, again, the appointment process for various RFMOs, specifically the process for appointments to the North Pacific Fisheries Commission (recall the implementing legislation for that Convention includes Commissioner status for the Chairs (or designees) of the three west coast Councils). NOAA expressed their commitment to continue to work with the State Department and the White House to resolve that appointment process.

Regarding the issue of monument designations under the Antiquities Act, a recent Presidential Executive Order (**attached**) calls for the Department of Interior, in consultation with Department of Commerce and other agencies, to review such designations made since January of 1996. This is an issue of utmost concern to the Western Pacific Council, but you recall that we also signed a CCC letter earlier this year expressing the appropriateness of the Council process to manage fishing activities in these areas. At our May CCC meeting we signed on to another letter (**attached**) addressed to Secretary Zinke and Secretary Ross supporting the Councils' input in these monument reviews.

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Regarding legislation, particularly MSA reauthorization, in April we reviewed a draft NPFMC comment letter on HR200 (which is similar to HR1335 from the previous Congress). Based on your input in April I have finalized that comment letter in anticipation of our input being requested, either by comment letter or by invitation to testify at upcoming hearings on MSA reauthorization (letter **attached**). For further reference, I have also **attached** the most recent Congressional activities reports (for April and May) from our CCC legislative liaison Dave Whaley.

At our May CCC meeting we spent considerable time further developing a CCC Position Paper on MSA reauthorization (**attached**). The intent of this document is to capture areas of CCC consensus on major reauthorization issues (contained in HR200 or other bills which have been introduced), and to also capture individual Council positions on these various issues where relevant. Many of these issues and positions overlap with our own Council comments on HR200, but this position paper expands to other issues not contained in HR200. As one example, HR2023 introduced by Congressman Graves from Louisiana has numerous provisions specific to the Gulf of Mexico red snapper fisheries, but also contains a few provisions which would apply to all regions (HR2023 **attached**). One of these provisions would impart significant constraints and implementation hurdles for Exempted Fishing Permits (EFPs). Because of the importance of EFPs to many of our management initiatives in the North Pacific (EM, deck sorting, salmon and halibut bycatch reduction, etc.), we developed language for the CCC Position Paper explaining the importance of the EFP process and how the provisions of HR2023 would negatively impact our management process. This Position Paper continues to be a work in progress, but when requested for comment on reauthorization is represents a comprehensive perspective from the Regional Councils.

Other Events this Week

On Tuesday, June 6, Oceana is sponsoring a screening and discussion of the film “An Ocean Mystery: The Missing Catch”, which follows Dr. Daniel Pauley’s research on worldwide fisheries removals. This is free and open to the public, at 7:00 pm at the Gold Town Nickelodeon, 171 Shattuck Way. Flyer with details **attached**.

On Wednesday (10 am to 5 pm) we will have our joint meeting with the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC). The main agenda items will be our abundance-based halibut PSC initiatives and respective research priorities. The full agenda is posted under B7.

On Thursday evening, June 8, there will be a seafood dinner/reception (open to all) hosted by a number of the Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups. It will start around 6 pm at the Juneau Yacht Club (just at the end of the small boat harbor off Egan).

IGFA article on Top Charter Captain

I encourage you all to go to the link (**attached**), which is to a recent article in the International Game Fish Association’s World Record Fisheries. It is very interesting and you will all recognize this guy, who is a recognized kingpin in the charter captain’s world!