

North Pacific Fishery Management Council

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NPFMC Ecosystem Committee Minutes January 31, 2017 Seattle, WA

Committee members present: Bill Tweit (Chairman), Stephanie Madsen, Rose Fosdick, Dave Fluharty, Steve Ignell, John Iani (phone), Jeanne Hanson (phone), Dave Benton (phone), Jim Ayers (phone), Steve MacLean (Council staff)

Others present: Kerim Aydin, Diana Evans (Council staff), Stefani Zador, Steve Marx, Jon Reum, Lori Swanson, Brandee Gerke, Abby Turner, Ivonne Ortiz, Kirstin Holsman, David Witherell (Council staff), Frank Kelty

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council's Ecosystem Committee (ECO) met in Seattle, WA on January 31, 2017 from 9 AM – 1 PM. The purpose of the meeting was to review outcomes from the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Team meeting that took place on January 18 & 19, 2017 in Seattle, WA.

Diana Evans presented a review of the Bering Sea FEP Discussion Paper from 2015 to review the concept of the FEP that the Council approved. Ms. Evans and Dr. Kerim Aydin, co-chairmen of the BS FEP Team, then walked through the report from the BS FEP Team. The ECO asked questions and provided comment for each section of the FEP Team report.

The FEP Team addressed the FEP Goals and Objectives and noted some duplication or similarity between them and the NPFMC Ecosystem Vision Statement. They recommend that those similarities should be addressed at a future meeting, and recommended some edits to the FEP Objectives to clarify the role of humans in the ecosystem and also recommended a section on terms to clarify the intended meaning of key terms (e.g., Ecosystem includes a “coupled socio-ecological system”). Dr. Aydin also noted that as the FEP Team continues to develop models of the ecosystem, as approved, and to use those to identify gaps that are present, they will inform further development of appropriate FEP Goals which can be brought back to the ECO for additional review.

The ECO generally agreed with that approach. The ECO noted that it is important that terms are clearly identified to ensure that the ECO and Council's intent is captured in the FEP (e.g., ensure that ecosystem processes, not only human-ecosystem linkages are considered). The ECO noted that the modifications proposed for the first bullet might be too limiting. The ECO noted that other organizations are addressing terminology, and encouraged the FEP Team to note other terms and carefully define what their intended meanings are (e.g., traditional knowledge). It was also noted that terminology that is already familiar to Council stakeholders is appropriate for the BS FEP because the audiences for the FEP already understands them; the ECO is concerned that incorporating new terminology into the FEP will decrease its utility to a broad audience.

The ECO expressed concern over the deletion in the second bulleted FEP objective, and **recommended retaining language that clearly identifies providing a mechanism for incorporating ecosystem**

information in the Council process. The FEP Team co-chairmen agreed that the deletion is likely unnecessary and would revisit with the Team.

The FEP Team report includes italicized lists of Action Modules that could meet or contribute to the FEP Objectives. **The ECO noted that these are FEP Team notes and have not been reviewed by the ECO and should not be construed as a list of approved Action Modules.**

The ECO noted that the FEP Objectives and Goals is missing the opportunity to note when and how the FEP and resulting management improve the economic efficiency and economic well-being of fisheries, and fishery-dependent communities. The ECO recommended **that the BS FEP Team consider language in the FEP Goals and Objectives specifying that improving the economic and social value of Bering Sea fisheries is one of the purposes of the FEP, and look at how the FEP can lead to higher value, more productive fisheries for this and future generations.**

The ECO generally agreed with the BS FEP Team's plan to develop a description of the "onramps" for integrating actions and results of action modules in the Council process. There was some discussion that metrics of effectiveness of the FEP could include both input variables (how did XX get used) and outcomes in the ocean (how did management decision affect the ocean). It was noted that these metrics should be carefully thought through to ensure efficient use of Council and Agency resources.

The ECO recommended that the FEP Team concentrate on the action modules approved previously and described in the BS FEP Discussion Paper, but begin considering additional action modules *without yet beginning work on them*. The ECO had some reservations about an action module to consider habitat effects indicators at this point. It was considered premature and noted that the gap analysis and modeling modules are likely to inform appropriate habitat indicators. The ECO did support the general concept of a research tracking module, noting that a research tracking tool may be a necessary component of the FEP itself, and noted the importance to development of the scientific foundation of the FEP of tracking the fate of research priorities identified by the Council.

The ECO also recommended that as the Core FEP document matures, the FEP Team **consider opportunities for public review and comment.**

Following discussion of the BS FEP, Steve MacLean provided a brief report from the Protected Species Assessment Workshop that took place in Seattle on January 17-19.