

Executive Director's Report

Climate Science Strategy and Arctic Updates

Previously we discussed having an informal briefing and discussion with NOAA and State Department leadership on Arctic issues, to keep us abreast of major science and governance issues which may be of relevance or interest to the Council. Dr. Richard Merrick, NMFS Chief Science Advisor, and Mr. David Balton, Ambassador for Oceans and Fisheries, U.S. State Department, will be available on Monday morning February 9 to provide a briefing for the Council. I note the recent Executive Order from the President (**attached**) which will affect NOAA's and other agencies' ongoing efforts with regard to Arctic issues. That EO establishes a high level Arctic Executive Steering Committee designed to oversee and coordinate the various U.S. governmental initiatives and strategic plans for the Arctic. Dr. Merrick will also provide a presentation on the agency's draft Climate Science Strategy (**attached**) for which the agency is seeking input from the regional fishery management Councils.

I would also note a few other Arctic related meetings which have recently occurred, or which will be occurring soon: (1) Chairman Hull and I had the opportunity to meet informally with Mr. Craig MacLean (head of NOAA's Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR)) and Dr. Rick Spinrad (Chief Scientist for NOAA) during the Alaska Marine Science Symposium in January. These two agencies are deeply involved in the agency's Arctic research mission and our discussions underscored their desire to incorporate the Council's perceived research needs relative to fisheries issues in the Arctic; (2) on December 4 I attended the Joint Ocean Commission's Arctic Ocean Leadership Roundtable, which was focused on generating ideas about how local, state, and regional priorities can inform national Arctic policies. A summary report from that meeting is **attached**; (3) on March 4 the Consortium for Ocean Leadership will host its annual Public Policy Forum, titled "Predicting and Preparing for a Changing Arctic". I was just recently invited to speak at this forum on 'science needs for stakeholders', but will be unable to attend due to a previous commitment. I am working with them to recommend an alternate speaker.

Finally, the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission recently released its Final Report and Implementation Plan and I have **attached** the Executive Summary of that report for your information.

National Standard 1 guidelines

On January 20 NMFS published a proposed rule for revising the guidelines for National Standard 1 (as well as National Standards 3 and 7), with a comment deadline of June 30 (**attached**). These revisions address the MSA requirements relative to annual catch limits, preventing overfishing, stock rebuilding, and achievement of OY. Many of these issues have been at the center of proposed bills to reauthorize the MSA, and the revisions may address, to some degree, many of the concerns which have prompted proposed legislative remedies. Staff has not had the ability to conduct a detailed review of this proposed rule, but fortunately we have considerable time before the comment deadline. It is important to note that the Council Coordination Committee (CCC) will receive a detailed presentation of this proposed rule at our upcoming interim meeting, February 19-20 in Washington, D.C., and we will benefit from the

collective discussion of the CCC. I propose that we also request our SSC to review the proposed revisions at its April meeting to help inform development of our Council comments. Following these reviews I can better assess the details and potential impacts, then prepare draft comments for Council consideration at our June meeting.

NOAA stock assessment program reviews

Last week I received the 2014 NOAA Fisheries Stock Assessment Program Review (**attached**), and a notification of the 2015 review process which will focus on protected species science for assessments. The Alaska Fisheries Science Center review will take place March 16-20 at the AFSC in Seattle and is open to the public. Dr. Merrick may be able to answer any questions regarding this review process when he is here on Monday, February 9.

Events this week

An industry sponsored reception will be held on Wednesday evening, February 4, here at the Renaissance Hotel (2nd floor). On Thursday, February 5, Alaska Symphony of Seafood, Seattle Open House, will be held at the Palace Ballroom on 5th Avenue downtown. See **attached** flyer for details. On Thursday, February 5th we will be having our joint meeting with the IPHC beginning at 10 am.

Bob Mace Award

In 2006, after his passing and after 23 years representing the State of Oregon on the NPFMC, our Council created the Bob Mace Distinguished Service Award, as its highest honor. This award is only occasionally bestowed by the Council (it's kind of a know-it-when-we-see-it award), "when an individual exemplifies the highest levels of dedication, professionalism, and conversation ethic necessary to make the fisheries off Alaska the best managed in the world". It is bestowed upon nomination by a Council member and concurrence of the entire Council. Past recipients are:

2006 – Council staff members ; 2007 – Stephanie Madsen; 2008 – Thorne Smith; 2010 – Sue Salveson; 2012 – Ken Hanson

At its December 2014 Executive Session meeting, the Council made Mr. Martin Loefflad the latest recipient of the Bob Mace Distinguished Service Award. Martin has a lengthy career in fisheries management, and has worked with the Council in numerous capacities, but his work with the groundfish observer program clearly stands out. The groundfish observer program is a fundamental pillar of our sustainable management of North Pacific fisheries. Martin led what is one of the most important, and challenging, fisheries management divisions in the Nation, and he did so with a calm effectiveness and an ever-positive attitude. Over the past several years, Martin led us through the observer program restructuring, which represents a crowning career accomplishment. He worked above and beyond to effect this program restructuring, including an impressive outreach effort involving numerous meetings with stakeholders throughout Alaska and the Pacific northwest. The challenges were numerous and at times daunting, and required a number of difficult commitments, but Martin followed through on all of those commitments and, well, he got er done! Many people contributed to the success of the program restructuring, but Martin's leadership through this process warrants special recognition in the form of the Bob Mace Award.

