



Community Engagement Committee

Report

4 June 2019, Sitka, AK

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council’s Community Engagement Committee met to review and discuss methods and strategies for Council engagement with rural and Alaska Native communities.

Committee Members in attendance:

Simon Kinneen (Co-chair)	Tom Panamaroff	Marissa Merculieff
Theresa Peterson (Co-chair)	Nicole Kimball	Mellisa Heflin
Jennifer Hooper	Becca Robbins Gisclair	Rob Sanderson (ph)

Members absent: Robert Keith

Others in attendance:

Julie Raymond-Yakoubian	Rachel Baker	Art Severence
Brenden Raymond - Yakoubian	Bob Foy	Raychelle Daniel
Sally Bibb	David Witherell	
	Savannah Miller	

The Community Engagement Committee (CEC) met in Sitka on 4 June, 2019 to continue their work to review existing Council engagement strategies and practices to identify potential deficiencies and make recommendations for improvements to existing programs or recommend new strategies and programs. The CEC will continue to meet and develop recommendations for the Council. Committee recommendations will be delivered to the Council at the conclusion of the process. Committee reports are considered progress reports until the final recommendations are drafted and presented.

Opportunity for public comment was provided at multiple points during the meeting. Public comment was provided by Dr. Bob Foy (AFSC), Julie Raymond-Yakoubian (Kawerak, Inc.), Raychelle Daniel (Pew Charitable Trusts), Frank Kelty (City of Unalaska), Verner Wilson (Friends of the Earth International), and Heather McCarty (CBSFA).

The CEC’s review was focused around a list of current Council engagement activities and strategies prepared by Council staff. The CEC noted that much of the work that the Council and staff currently engage in are focused outreach around specific Council actions, rather than community engagement. The CEC recognized the usefulness and effectiveness of these activities. The CEC agreed that these actions should continue and the work of the CEC is to suggest strategies and programs to improve outreach and focus on developing two-way engagement strategies.

The CEC walked through the annotated list of council communication strategies and identified opportunities for improvement and new strategies. At this point, the CEC is identifying strategies for which they want to continue discussion and clarification at later meetings when the final report is prepared. The discussion points that follow should be considered items for further discussion, not consensus recommendations of the committee.

The CEC suggested that the Council could consider developing live, organized training for local community members when the Council holds meeting in Alaskan communities. It was also suggested that the Council could develop a publicly available (YouTube, etc.) training video that might reach a larger audience, but not replace in-person training. It was also noted that some tribal organizations provide cultural training for police, etc. that work in villages and may be available if the Council were interested in such training for new Council members and staff. The CEC recommended that cultural training for Council members and staff should be considered.

Regarding current council meeting activities, the CEC discussed opportunities for testimony via telephone rather than in-person testimony. Testifying via telephone could reduce the anxiety that some people have about testifying in person, and make the opportunity more affordable by eliminating travel costs and restrictions.

The CEC discussed opportunities and requirements for the Council to meet in communities other than Anchorage, Juneau, Sitka, and Kodiak.

The CEC discussed ways to expand the distribution of Council pamphlets and electronic communications like the newsletter. The CEC noted that many in rural Alaska rely on social media platforms such as Facebook to share news and that many other organizations in rural Alaska have Facebook pages to distribute information. Many committee members suggested that a Council Facebook page would be an excellent opportunity to quickly share information in rural Alaskan communities.

The CEC discussed Council committees and it was noted that the committee process is often least understood by rural community members. The CEC suggested that more outreach explaining the committee process would be useful, and could be included in the recommended community training and video. Some committee members noted that community members are often more comfortable presenting to the less formal committees than to the full Council, but need to understand that testimony at committees may not be presented to the Council (unless written testimony is provided to the committee). The CEC also discussed whether public testimony presented to committees should be summarized in committee minutes. Current Council policy is to note that public testimony was provided to the committee, but it is not appropriate for council staff to summarize public testimony. Rather, the Council provides many opportunities for the public to provide oral and written testimony to committees, the SSC, AP, and Council. It was clarified that written public comment would be accepted at the CEC until the meeting starts.

The CEC discussed the utility of a Council Tribal Advisory Committee that could provide information on Council actions that could affect tribes in Alaska, and also provide opportunity for tribal members to provide comment and information to the Council that might not be part of the Council agenda. The CEC also discussed the idea of a designated time for tribes to provide information directly to the Council. It was also noted that the BS FEP is developing the LK/TK and Subsistence Action Module that will provide recommendations to the Council on a process for integrating traditional knowledge and the Council process. Another suggestion was the creation of a dedicated Tribal Liaison on Council staff who could serve as a central contact point for tribes and be responsible for facilitating and assisting with engagement.

The CEC discussed Council Plan Teams, it was noted that many on the CEC did not know the purpose of Plan Teams, and they are largely unknown in rural Alaska. It was noted that the Crab Plan Team held a meeting in Nome that was a good opportunity for two-way engagement with Plan Team members.

The CEC discussed project-specific scoping and actions, such as Council visits to rural communities. Committee members noted that community members appreciate when meetings take place in their communities outside of the Council process. One committee member suggested that the Council or Council committee should visit at least one rural community annually. This would provide opportunity

for both general and project specific engagement, including the opportunity for Council process training discussed earlier.

The CEC also encouraged the Council to explore opportunities to provide presentations or rent booths at large tribal conferences such as the Alaska Federation of Natives annual conference or the First Alaskans Institute Elders and Youth Conference that precedes the AFN conference, and BIA providers conferences. It was noted, however, that these larger conferences are more amenable to Council outreach than two-way engagement. An advantage to having a presence at the larger meetings is to establish contacts with villages and tribal organizations that may lead to more direct two-way engagement in the future.

The CEC discussed next steps for the committee. The committee expressed that they have now considered the existing Council communication strategies and methods and should now identify tools and methods to engage rural communities. The CEC received information on Tribal Consultation from NMFS Alaska Region before this meeting and agreed that the CEC would discuss Tribal Consultation and coordination at a future meeting.

The CEC suggested that the next meeting could occur in September, likely in Anchorage. Staff were tasked with developing a poll to determine available time for the committee.