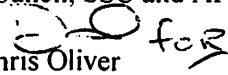


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members  
FROM:  for  
Chris Oliver  
Executive Director  
DATE: September 28, 2010  
SUBJECT: Miscellaneous Issues

ESTIMATED TIME 4 HOURS ALL D-3 ITEMS
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ACTION REQUIRED

- (d) Preliminary review of HAPC proposals.

BACKGROUND

Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) are geographic sites that fall within the distribution of EFH for the Council's managed species. The Council has a formalized process, identified in its fishery management plans (FMP), for selecting HAPCs. Under this process, the Council periodically considers whether to set priority habitat types and initiates a call for proposals for HAPC candidate areas that meet the specific priority habitat type(s). Members of the public, organizations, Federal, and other agencies may submit proposals. Sites proposed under this process are then sent to the Council's Plan Teams for scientific review to determine ecological merit. Council and agency staff also review HAPC proposals for socioeconomic and management and enforcement impacts. This combined information is then presented to the SSC, AP, and Council, which may choose to select HAPC proposals for full analysis and implementation.

At the April 2010 meeting, the Council set a habitat priority type—skate nurseries—and issued a call of proposals in conjunction with the completion of the EFH 5-year review process. The Request for Proposals (RFP), which included the Council's evaluation priorities, was announced in the Federal Register (75 FR 21600) and Council newsletter, and is attached (**Item D-3(d)(1)**). The proposal period opened April 26, 2010 and continued until August 31 (extended from August 16). Two HAPC proposals were received (**Items D-3(d)(2) and D-3(d)(3)**). Note that the second proposal is a subset of the sites identified in the first proposal. Initial screening by staff indicates that both of these proposals adhere to the Council's HAPC priorities and appear to meet at least two of the four HAPC considerations, including rarity of the habitat type.

In September 2010, the Groundfish Plan Teams reviewed the submitted HAPC proposals for ecological merit. The Plan Teams' comments are contained within the joint Plan Team report (refer back to **Item D-2(a)**). The Plan Teams found ecological merit to the proposals' areas due to the low population growth of skates, the long development time during which the embryos are vulnerable to fishing gear, and the relatively high level of production provided by the small proposed areas of the eastern of Bering Sea. Additionally, if approved by the Council, the joint Plan Teams recommend allocation of research funds to monitor the effectiveness of the protection measures taken.

Should the Council wish to move ahead with the HAPC process, the Ecosystem and Enforcement Committees will review the HAPC proposals during the December Council meeting and Council and agency staff will review proposals for socioeconomic considerations.

A schedule outlining the steps involved in the current HAPC proposal cycle is provided below:

<b>Steps in the HAPC process</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Council identifies HAPC priorities	April 2010
FR Notice for Request For Proposals; period to submit opens and closes	April 26-August 31 (18 weeks)
Council staff initial screening of proposals for adherence to priorities and completeness	September 2010
Plan Teams joint meeting for scientific review and ecological merit of proposals	September 2010
<i>Council review and decision on proposals to forward for Plan Team review</i>	<i>October 2010 (*)</i>
Council staff review of proposals for socioeconomic and management and enforcement	October – January
Ecosystem and Enforcement Committees review	December 2010
Council decision on whether to formulate proposals into an amendment analysis and develop alternates	February 2011 (T)
Initial review of amendment analysis	April 2011 (T)
Final action on amendment analysis	June 2011 (T)

(T) = Tentatively scheduled

(\*) = The Council is currently at this step of the HAPC proposal cycle.