



NORTH PACIFIC FISHERY MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

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Action Memo

File Number:GF 16-002

Agenda Date2/1/2016

Agenda Number:D4

Dan Hull, Chairman
Chris Oliver, Executive Director

SUBJECT:

Groundfish Policy and Workplan; Ecosystem Committee Report - Review

STAFF CONTACT: Jim Armstrong

ACTION REQUIRED:

Discuss potential changes to Groundfish Policy Workplan

BACKGROUND:

The Council's policy is to apply judicious and responsible fisheries management practices, based on sound scientific research and analysis, proactively rather than reactively, to ensure the sustainability of fishery resources and associated ecosystems for the benefit of future, as well as current generations.

The Council's groundfish management policy was adopted in April 2003, and through it, the Council intends, on an ongoing basis, to adopt measures that accelerate a precautionary, adaptive management approach through community-based or rights-based management, ecosystem-based management principles that protect managed species from overfishing, and where appropriate and practicable, increase habitat protection and bycatch constraints.

The adoption of the Groundfish Policy amended the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs such that a set of nine general priorities are identified among which are distributed a suite of 45 more specific management objectives (see attached chapter 5 from final SIR). Because these are "hardwired" into each FMP, modification of the objectives would require FMP amendments. Nevertheless, review of the objectives in light of existing management actions has been ongoing. In April 2014, the Council approved a supplemental information report (SIR) that, among other things, documents the management changes since the 2004 PSEIS in order to evaluate the need for a new supplemental NEPA analysis. The conclusion of the SIR was that through its establishment of an adaptive management approach that anticipates the dynamic nature of fishery management, the 2004 PSEIS and its associated management policy continue to support and characterize the impacts of the Councils management actions.

The Council's groundfish workplan is a bridge between its management policy and its near term activities. Provided in tabular form for every Council meeting, the workplan provides columns including general priorities, specific priority actions, management objectives as appropriate, and finally "status", meaning recent or pending Council activities and associated time horizons (see attached status quo workplan). Although status and time horizon are updated for each meeting, the list of "specific priority actions" has not been modified since Feb 2007. Although intended to provide focus for Council actions within the context of its management objectives, the specificity of these priority actions may tend to preclude, in the workplan, current actions that do not match up with the subset of management objectives that correspond with the listed "specific priority actions". As such, regular revision of this portion of the plan may be more onerous than originally intended.

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At this Council meeting, the Council may wish to reconsider how it conducts reviews of its activity relative to its management priorities and objectives. Alternative formulations of the workplan are attached that include removing the “specific priority actions” and instead listing out all of the management objectives so that activity can be listed examined relative to them (see attached Alt 1). Taking this a step further, the Council may wish to include a column that captures both its current and cumulative history of actions relative to management objectives (see attached Alt 2). In the attached, this column is taken from chapter 5 in the SIR. Also in this latter approach, the completion of items in the “current activity” column would tend to move to the list of accomplishment listed in the “cumulative” column such that it provides a record of ongoing and historic accomplishments under the management policy.

Prior to making a decision on how best to proceed, the Council will receive reports on the agenda item from the Ecosystem Committee and the Advisory Panel.