



## E Staff Tasking

October 2020 Council Meeting

### Action Memo

Council Staff: David Witherell, Diana Evans  
Action Required: 1. Review Committees and Plan Teams  
2. Provide direction on tasking priorities and scheduling

## BACKGROUND

### Committees and Plan Teams

#### Membership

Attached is the updated Council committee list reflecting changes since June 2020. Following this meeting, the Council will announce a request for nominations for 2021 Advisory Panel and SSC members, and appointments to the Pacific Northwest Crab Industry Advisory Committee (PNCIAC) for 2021-2022.

#### Meeting status

Committee and Plan Team meetings that are currently anticipated between October and December 2019, all occurring virtually, include:

- **Charter Halibut Management Committee** – October 27, late Nov/early Dec (TBD)
- **BSAI and GOA Groundfish Plan Teams**, November 16-20
- **Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan Taskforce on Local Knowledge/Traditional Knowledge/Subsistence Impacts** – November 9-10
- **Ecosystem Committee** – November 12 (T)
- **Community Engagement Committee** – dates TBD
- **EDR stakeholder discussions (one for each EDR)** – dates TBD
- **SSPT teleconference on EDR alternatives** – dates TBD following stakeholder discussions

#### EDR/SSPT Update

The Council is in the process of considering revisions to its Economic Data Reporting (EDR) Programs. It currently has two outstanding motions on EDRs and has requested its Social Science Planning Team to (SSPT) assist with the review and revisions to the EDRs, while incorporating opportunities for public input. Thus far, this has included a virtual EDR stakeholder workshop held on Aug 26 and a follow-up SSPT meeting on Sept 21. An attachment on the eAgenda provides additional detail on the proposed process and timeline for generating input to the Council on this topic. Council staff Sarah Marrinan is available for follow-up questions.

## Tasking and Scheduling

Attached are updated versions of tasking documents that are normally included as background material for staff tasking: the 3-meeting outlook, Council staff responsibilities, groundfish workplan update, and status of Observer Program projects. We have also provided an update on the status of all ongoing or initiated Council projects scheduled for 2021 and beyond, and advisory groups, in Tables 1 and 2.

We are planning for online rather than in-person meetings through the end of the calendar year. For 2021, we have not yet made any decisions, however we are contingency planning for the continuation of entirely virtual meetings, as well as considering how to include remote options to accommodate members, presenters and testifiers who are not immediately able to travel to or attend large in-person gatherings such as a Council meeting. As we discussed in June, the final decision about whether a Council meeting is in person or virtual will be made by the Chair, in consultation with the Executive Director.

### December 2020 agenda

A preliminary December agenda is posted to the eAgenda for your review. Similar to October, we are planning 7 hour meeting days and not meeting over the weekend. We do plan to overlap the SSC and AP meetings in December, however, to shorten the overall meeting footprint. Agenda items that must be taken up in December include BSAI and GOA groundfish specifications, charter halibut management measures for 2021, and final action for the Cook Inlet Salmon FMP amendment. Additionally, we have scheduled the two additional items that were included in the Council's June 2020 motion for December: the Initial Review analysis for the BSAI Pacific cod Trawl Catcher Vessel LAPP, and the Initial Review analysis of the BSAI Pacific cod Pot Catcher Processors Recency action.

### Expectation for BSAI Trawl CV Pacific cod LAPP in December 2020

The Council is scheduled to review the BSAI Pacific cod trawl CV LAPP analysis for initial review in December 2020. If you recall, the Council was originally scheduled to receive a preliminary review of the analysis in June 2020, at which you were to provide additional clarity and determinations on several ambiguous issues with the elements and options. In the absence of this additional direction, staff have used their best judgement to complete the initial review analysis of the elements and options, including preliminary considerations for the gear conversion element (Element 14), and have also analyzed two staff-developed strawman alternatives to contrast with the status quo alternative. It will be important at the December initial review for the Council to carefully review the staff clarifications and assumptions, and the strawman alternatives, and provide direction and adjustment as necessary. As such, the Council may choose to request a second initial review before moving to final action. Given this potential, and the fact that the SSC will have very little meeting time to devote to issues other than groundfish specifications in December, we are considering holding off on SSC review of the analysis until a future meeting.

Typically, at an in-person meeting, the presentation of an allocation analysis would take several hours. Because the December meeting will be virtual, we are seeking feedback from the Council on the best way to present this complex analysis. With the delay due to the covid-19 schedule changes, the analysis has been completed, and can be made available to the public immediately following this meeting. This extended review period will provide ample opportunity for people to read and understand the fairly lengthy analysis, and allow staff to provide a more streamlined presentation in December. Further, the extra time allows us to consider additional opportunities to help the public with advance review of the document, ranging from release of focused powerpoint presentations on each of the elements and options to a live webinar presentation of key elements. The focus of any such additional staff work would be to allow Council members and the public to fully understand what is in the document prior to policy discussions and clarifications that will be the focus of the December meeting. The Council may wish to provide guidance to staff regarding any additional outreach on this analysis.

**Table 1 Status of Council projects scheduled for February 2021 and beyond**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Status report</i>
<i>Initial reviews</i>	SBRM amendments (recommending initial/final in single meeting)	Analysis underway to bring the BSAI Crab and Scallop FMPS int compliance with the requirement to include a standardized bycatch reporting methodology. Much of the analytical work was included in the February 2020 discussion paper, but additional coordination is still needed with ADFG to finalize the analysis. Combined initial review/final action currently scheduled for February 2020.
	Small sablefish release	Analysis underway by Council and NMFS regional office staff. The analysis does, however, require input from AFSC stock assessment staff, which may be difficult until after groundfish stock assessment cycle is complete. Initial review currently scheduled for February 2021.
	BSAI Crab PSC limit reductions (prelim/initial)	Analysis underway to consider the impact of changing the crab PSC limits in the BSAI groundfish fisheries to the lowest possible level in times when the directed fishery is closed. Crab stock assessment authors provided sensitivity analysis on theoretical unobserved mortality by rerunning assessments with higher levels of PSC while holding other parameters constant.
<i>Program reviews</i>	GOA sablefish pots	On hold. Data are collated for the 3-year program review, but the full write up not yet been completed as analysts pivoted to other priorities. The Council requested IFQ Committee review of the program review before it comes to the Council.
	Halibut Catch Share Plan allocation review	Staff assigned, but not yet started. Program review of charter/commercial halibut allocation planned for review in late 2021.
	GOA Pcod allocation review	Not started yet. The purpose is to review the existing GOA Pacific cod sector allocations to see whether they are still meeting the Council's intent for and objectives of the program. Rescheduled for 2022.
<i>Discussion papers</i>	IFQ access opportunities*	The Council requested an expanded discussion paper identifying considerations related to the creation of a quota access pool for halibut and sablefish quota share that facilitates entry-level opportunities. The paper is largely complete. The Council requested it be reviewed by the IFQ Committee. Currently scheduled for April 2021.
	RQE funding mechanisms	The Council has tasked staff with a discussion paper to develop a mechanism for the Recreational Quota Entity (RQE) to fund the purchase of halibut quota share by selling halibut stamps to charter operators. The paper is not yet started as we are still awaiting U.S. Congressional action to allow the funding mechanism.
	BSAI Pcod small boat (<60') access	Not started yet. The paper will look at community concerns and small boat access challenges identified in the <60 ft fixed gear BSAI Pacific cod sector, including expanding the allowable participants to fish off of the jig sector allocation to small fixed gear catcher vessels.
<i>Other Reports or Activities</i>	AI pollock EFP Final Report	The principal investigator will prepare the final report on EFP authorizing vessels participating in the 2019 and 2020 Aleutian Islands pollock fishery to conduct experimental fishing that was to provide information on methods to reduce bycatch of Pacific ocean perch (POP). The written report will be available for the December 2020 meeting; the Council may choose whether and when they wish to receive an oral presentation.
	Upcoming EFP consultations	At this stage, two EFP applications are anticipated for Council review in February 2021. These are: 1) a request from John Gauvin, representing the Alaska Seafood Cooperative, for an EFP to test improvements to halibut excluder devices in Amendment 80 flatfish fisheries of the Bering Sea, and 2) a request from Chad See, of the Freezer Longline Conservation Cooperative, for an EFP to conduct a northern Bering Sea hook and line Pacific cod survey
	Plan Team policies	Development is underway for a Plan Team handbook, for Council approval. The handbook will be similar to ones developed for the SSC and the AP, and will include criteria for PT membership, and Council policies on the relative roles of the Plan Teams, the SSC, and the Council. Prior to Council review, a draft will be shared with a Council-SSC-PT subgroup.
	Economic Data Report (EDR) workshops / analyses	As described earlier, Council staff and the SSPT are in the process of conducting a series of EDR workshops to inform two analyses that the Council has initiated to consider revisions to the EDR requirements. The workshop report is currently scheduled for Council review in February 2021.

\* IFQ hired master and IFQ quota share transfer discussion papers are not listed in this table, despite being in the batter's box, as the Council wanted to review the IFQ access opportunities paper before work starts on those discussion papers.

**Table 2 Status of Council Advisory Groups**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Advisory Group</b>	<b>Status report</b>
<i>Committees</i>	Community Engagement Committee	The Committee is finalizing its report of recommendations to the Council on opportunities to improve community engagement in the Council process. The Committee plans to meet in the next few months to discuss the draft report. Council review is currently scheduled for February 2021.
	Ecosystem Committee	The Ecosystem Committee intends to meet over the next few months to discuss outstanding issues, including updates on the Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan and taskforce work, updates on marine mammal status, and other topics. A report to the Council is currently scheduled for February 2021.
	Enforcement Committee	The Enforcement Committee meets whenever the Council is considering analyses or reports that raise potential enforcement or safety questions or concerns. The Committee co-Chairs will continue to use the Council's agenda as a guide for when to meet again.
	Fishery Monitoring Advisory Committee (FMAC)/ Partial Coverage subset (PCFMAC)	The FMAC will meet again next May to review the 2020 Observer Annual Report and discuss monitoring issues relevant to all sectors. The 2019 Annual Report is still delayed, but will be available on the Council's website when it is complete. The PCFMAC continues to track issues specific to the partial coverage sector, including the ADP and cost efficiency work. See also the observer project status list (on the eAgenda).
	IFQ Committee	The IFQ Committee meets at the Council's direction but does not have a meeting scheduled at this time. There are five items that the IFQ Committee <i>could</i> review – two of which have tentative places on future Council agendas: Small Sablefish Release initial review (Feb. 2020), IFQ Access Opportunities discussion paper (April 2021), as well as the GOA sablefish pot fishery review, a hired master discussion paper, and a quota share transfer mechanism discussion paper – each unscheduled. Of those, the Council has specifically requested IFQ Committee review of the IFQ Access Opportunities discussion paper and the GOA sablefish pot review.
	Trawl EM Committee	The Trawl EM Committee will be focusing in 2021 on the development of a regulatory analysis to support Trawl EM use in the BS and GOA pollock fisheries. At this meeting, the Committee proposed to the Council a schedule for getting to initial review of the analysis by December 2021, so that the Council stays on track with its goal for implementation in 2023.
	<i>Plan Teams/ Taskforces</i>	Stock assessment Plan Teams
Bering Sea Fishery Ecosystem Plan (BS FEP) Team		The BS FEP Team met in March 2020, and is scheduled to provide its report to the Council in February 2021. The Team is focused on progress of the BS FEP action module Taskforces (see below), and developing an ecosystem health report card for the Bering Sea ecosystem.
BS FEP Climate Change Taskforce (CCTF)		The CCTF has largely been on hold since its last meeting in February, as other tasking has taken priority over the spring and summer months (as a result of COVID reprioritizations). The goal of the Taskforce is to synthesize current knowledge regarding climate change effects on the Bering Sea ecosystem; identify potential climate-resilient management measures that can improve adaptive capacity and avoid maladaptation; evaluate risks, timescales, and probability of success of climate-resilient policies; and provide recommendations for the Council. The Taskforce will regroup in the fall to continue developing a workplan for the module that responds to Ecosystem Committee and SSC/AP/Council comments in February 2020. The workplan is currently scheduled for review and approval by the Council in February 2021.
BS FEP Local Knowledge/ Traditional Knowledge/ Subsistence Taskforce (LKTKS)		In response to the Council's January 2020 motion, the LKTKS Taskforce has worked towards completion of several products including a scoping paper evaluating different onramp options for LKTKS information in the Council's decision-making process, creating a search engine to help analytical staff identify sources of LKTKS information which will be accompanied by descriptions of non-published sources of LKTKS information, an updated workplan, and a glossary of terms used by the Taskforce. COVID-19 has altered the Taskforce's plans to begin work on the Norton Sound Red King Crab case study, delaying the start of that work until 2021. The LKTKS Taskforce will discuss its ongoing work on the products mentioned above, and have a discussion on how to begin work outlining its protocols, at its next meeting, scheduled virtually on November 9-10, 2020.
Social Science Planning Team (SSPT)		The SSPT is currently focusing on the Council's priority of reconsidering economic data reporting programs. Once that is complete, the SSPT will be look for Council input on its next tasks, for instance resuming work on the Data Gap analysis.