

Northern Bering Sea Research Area (NBSRA) Research Plan Tentative
Schedule
revised as of March 29, 2010

July 2009 – May 2010

- Compilation of available ecological and fisheries baseline data
- Planning for public workshops

February 8- 16, 2010, NPFMC meeting (Portland, OR) – updates on:

- Preparations for NBSRA Community & Subsistence Workshop
- Baseline ecological and fisheries data research
- Expansion of NMFS eastern Bering Sea summer bottom trawl survey into NBSRA
- NPRB call for bottom habitat research proposals

February 24-25, 2010, NBSRA Community & Subsistence Workshop (Anchorage, AK) - agenda includes:

- Communication of research plan objectives and current status of plan development to the public and stakeholders
- Solicitation for ecological and subsistence information from the public for research planning
- Discussion of concerns regarding scientific research and commercial bottom trawling

Participants to include Alaska Native tribal representatives, village representatives, subsistence users, commercial fishing industry

July-August 2010 – NMFS Bering Sea bottom trawl survey

January 2011 (*originally proposed for May 2010*), NBSRA Science Meeting (Anchorage, AK) – agenda includes:

- Communication of research plan objectives and current status of plan development to researchers
- Solicitation for data contributions and expert knowledge for research planning
- Discussion of issues regarding the experimental design to be included in the research plan

Invitees to include researchers from government and non-government institutions who have expertise in Bering Sea fisheries and ecology, industry, and those interested in research in the NBSRA

March 2011, NBSRA Community & Subsistence Workshop (Anchorage, AK) – brief communities on progress and receive feedback on:

- results of summer Bering Sea bottom trawl survey
- outcome and recommendations from the NBSRA Science Workshop

April 2011, Public evening session (Anchorage, AK) –

- Updates on baseline information for the NBSRA and progress in plan development
- Present preliminary findings of 2010 NMFS bottom trawl survey in NBSRA
- Solicit comments and feedback, including industry input on possible areas of interest for commercial fishing

April 2011, NPFMC meeting (Anchorage, AK) – updates on:

- Progress in baseline data research and mapping of resources/habitats
- Status of research plan development

September 2011 – NPFMC review of draft NBSRA Research Plan

February 2012 (*originally proposed for October 2011*) – Finalize NBSRA Research Plan, begin NPFMC management action to implement changes to the NBSRA

The AFSC requests an extension of the timeline for plan development for the following reasons:

1. There is a need to delay planned Science Workshop originally scheduled for May 2010 because it coincides with the start of the field season in the Bering Sea, which will divert many of the potential attendees who are actively working in the region. Also, the NMFS Bering Sea bottom trawl survey will be conducted in July-August, 2010. Preliminary results will not be available until late 2010 or early 2011. These results would be useful for inclusion at the Science Workshop.
2. Many potential attendees are academics active in Bering Sea research funded by NPRB/NSF. Since there are no provisions for non-government travel for the Science Workshop, the best chance of achieving the desired attendance will be to convene the Science Meeting in conjunction with the Alaska Marine Science Symposium, January 2011 in Anchorage. NPRB/NSF principal investigators are obligated to attend the Symposium. It draws many more who are interested in the region.
3. As recommended by the Council, the AFSC has been compiling existing ecological data on the NBSRA. More time is required to synthesize the data for use in the Science Workshop.
4. Upon completion of the NBSRA Community & Subsistence Workshop on Feb 24-25, 2010, it is clear that an additional workshop involving this group should be held after the Science Workshop. The communities expressed strongly at the February 2010 workshop their wish for frequent communications with NMFS and the Council on research and management issues in their region, and their discomfort with the current timeline for plan development. The AFSC would like to conduct another Community and Subsistence Workshop in February 2011 after the Science Meeting, for further engagement and communication with communities.
5. The slight delay in the completion of the plan (from October 2011 to February 2012) will be in the best interest of all parties concerned.