Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence Taskforce
REPORT

January 5, 2023: 8:30am-11:30am AKDT

Teleconference

Taskforce members in attendance:
Kate Haapala (co-Chair, NPFMC), Sarah Wise (co-Chair, AFSC), Toby Anungazuk Jr. (Golovin), Robert Murphy (APU), Julie Raymond-Yakoubian (Kawerak, Inc.), Richard Slats (Chevak), Bridget Mansfield (NMFS), Darcy Peter (Beaver), and Simeon Swetzof (St. Paul)

Members absent: Rachel Donkersloot (Coastal Cultures Research) and Alida Trainor (ADFG)

Others in attendance:
Molly Watson (NMFS), Ernie Weiss, Terese Schomogyi, Steve Marx, Brenden Raymond-Yakoubian, Chris Tran, Megan Williams, Stephanie Madsen, Anne Vanderhoeven, Angel Drobnica, Heather Mann, John Ross, Serena Fitka, John Moeller, and Karen Gillis

Introductions

The co-Chairs of the Local Knowledge, Traditional Knowledge, and Subsistence (LKTKS) Taskforce opened the meeting with introductions and provided an overview of the agenda. **The purpose of this meeting was to provide the Taskforce, and members of the public, an additional opportunity to revisit the outcomes and major points of Taskforce dialogue from the December 2022 meeting**. Some Taskforce members were absent from the December 2022 meeting and others faced challenges with maintaining virtual connectivity due to poor weather. As such, while there were no new discussion items, the co-Chairs felt an additional meeting would help to ensure equitable access to information and support consensus building. The materials prepared for this meeting do not differ substantively from those posted for the Taskforce's December 2022 meeting. The Council and the public can expect to see the substantive LKTKS Protocol revisions discussed at the December 2022 meeting to be incorporated into the next public review draft posted for the Taskforce's spring 2023 meeting.

Overview of December 2022 Report

Under this section of the agenda, Kate Haapala provided an overview of the Taksforce's written report from its December 2022 meeting which was posted to the eAgenda for this meeting. The presentation provided a summary of feedback the co-Chairs had received from the Council, Council advisory bodies, and Taskforce members over the 2022 calendar year. Additionally, this section of the agenda and presentation covered the highlights of Taskforce member's dialogue in December 2022 related to the draft LKTKS Protocol's guidelines, draft onramp recommendations, timeline for future work, and the idea of the guidelines in the LKTKS Protocol becoming a guiding policy statement to inform the Council's process, should the Council choose to adopt the protocol.

Timeline of future work

Leading up to the Taskforce's December 2022 meeting, the co-Chairs received input from some Taskforce members that there could be value in providing the Council and the public an extended period

to review and provide comments on the protocol and onramp recommendations. At the December 2022 meeting, and again at this January meeting, the Taskforce discussed three options for how the Council could consider carrying out an extended review period (see slide 12). **The Taskforce reached consensus at this meeting to recommend the following approach to the Council.**

- When the Taskforce co-Chairs present a finalized draft of the LKTKS Protocol, onramp recommendations, and report to the Council at its April 2023 meeting, **the co-Chairs would convey the Taskforce's recommendation that the Council release the LKTKS Protocol and onramp recommendations presented at the April 2023 meeting for an extended public review period of 45 days**. The Taskforce envisions this review period would open at the close of the April 2023 Council meeting and be announced in the Council newsletter (e.g., open from April 14 – May 26, 2023).
- If the Council chooses to release the LKTKS protocol and onramp recommendations for an extended public review period, **the Taskforce is asking the Council to authorize one additional virtual meeting of the LKTKS Taskforce in June or July 2023 for the Taskforce to collectively review any public comments received and develop a plan for revising the materials released for the public review period**.
- The Council could expect to receive the final LKTKS Protocol, onramp recommendations, and a summary report of the extended public review period at its October 2023 meeting, pending any future scheduling issues the Council would need to consider. **Thus, under this approach, the Council, the Taskforce, and the public could expect the Council to consider taking final action at the October 2023 meeting on whether to adopt the final LKTKS Protocol to inform its decision-making process as well as consider initiating action on the onramp recommendation(s).**

The Taskforce did discuss the tradeoffs with this approach including internal capacity, short timelines, and having to meet during primary subsistence seasons; however, the Taskforce is recommending this approach for three primary reasons. First, given the public interest and engagement in the Taskforce progress thus far (as gauged through participation in meetings, public comment, and ongoing questions), the Taskforce felt an extended review period was warranted to allow for adequate consideration. Second, the Taskforce sees value in allowing members of the public, and especially Tribal governments and LK or TK holders, more time to engage with the final product and provide their input. Third, this approach also provides the Council two opportunities (tentatively at its April and October 2023 meetings) to engage with the LKTKS Protocol and consider how it could inform decision-making processes should they decide to adopt it. Finally, the Taskforce did discuss the option that Council could decide not to release the protocol for an extended public review period, and instead choose to adopt the protocol directly, or take no action to move this work forward in April 2023.

LKTKS Guidelines as a Policy Statement

The draft LKTKS Protocol provides guidance for identifying, analyzing, and incorporating LK, TK, and subsistence information into the Council's decision-making process. The entire protocol document provides the Council foundational information for working with these knowledge systems (e.g., by providing definitions, identifying possible challenges to incorporate LKTKS into the Council's decision-making process, and offering illustrative ideas to move this work forward, etc.). However, **the primary content for how to best identify and analyze LK, TK, and subsistence information within the context of the Council's process is housed in the guidelines** (Section 4). The onramps, or points of entry, for incorporating LK, TK, and subsistence information are possible tools for implementing the guidelines, should the Council adopt the protocol (Section 5).

Beginning in December 2022, and carrying forward to this meeting, the Taskforce discussed its vision for some of the tangible ways the Council could expect its process to change if it chooses to adopt the protocol. **Should the Council choose to adopt the protocol at a future meeting, it is the Taskforce's vision that the protocol guidelines would become a 'LKTKS Policy' to inform the Council's decision-making process.** The entire protocol document would become a foundational reference tool for the Council, staff, advisory bodies, and public to understand that LKTKS Policy statement. In short, by adopting the LKTKS Protocol, it is the Taskforce's current vision that the Council would be supporting the eight core guidelines (transformed to the short and accessible LKTKS Policy statement) while the broader document becomes the contextual lens through which to understand the LKTKS Policy.

In December 2022, and at this meeting, the co-Chairs developed draft language to illustrate the idea and to provide the Taskforce materials to consider (see slide 21). By taking this approach, it is the co-Chairs' intent to gain broader understanding by providing multiple opportunities for the Taskforce and members of the public to engage with this idea before taking it forward to the Council at the April 2023 meeting. At this stage, this *idea* has gained consensus among the Taskforce, but the Taskforce has not developed a first draft of the proposed policy statement. The Council and members of the public could expect to review a draft LKTKS Policy statement at its spring 2023 meeting.

As an example, guideline 1 in the draft LKTKS Protocol posted for the December 2022 meeting reads "understand and use the appropriate concepts for LK, TK, and subsistence;" and the primary language of guideline 1 could change to "the Council recognizes the importance of understanding and using the appropriate terms for LK, TK, and subsistence information for its work in the Bering Sea" as a policy statement. (Again, this is draft language provided by the co-Chairs to allow the Taskforce, members of the public, and potentially Council members to consider a tangible example.) The text directly below guideline 1 explains to the reader what the Taskforce means by this guideline and ideas for how to achieve it. Thus, **it is the Taskforce's vision that, in the future, if someone wanted to know the Council's approach to working with LK, TK, and subsistence information they could reference the LKTKS Policy statement on the Council's webpage and then turn to the full LKTKS Protocol to gain an understanding of the context that policy statement.**

Finally, the Taskforce sees this as an appropriate approach because adopting the LKTKS Protocol document would signal the Council's support for the Taskforce's work, and the commitment to the guidelines as its primary content. Additionally, the LKTKS Protocol provides the reader with a substantial amount of background information to properly situate the guidelines within the best available science, regional context, and cultural understanding. Should the Council adopt the protocol, the guidelines as a policy statement would provide a clear, concise expression of the Council's approach to working with LK, TK, and subsistence.

Onramps for LK, TK, and subsistence information

The Council's motion from January 2020 directs the Taskforce to identify potential onramps or points of entry for including LK, TK, the social science of LK and TK, and subsistence information in its decision-making process. Under this agenda item, the Taskforce had a chance to revisit the draft onramp recommendations and discuss whether there were any gaps and/or priorities. In December 2022, and again at this meeting, **the Taskforce reached consensus to support all the current onramp recommendations** (however, there were several revisions discussed at the December 2022 meeting that will be incorporated for public review at the Spring 2023 meeting).

One gap identified at this meeting was the role of co-presentations and co-authorship among Federal agencies and Tribal co-management partners. The intent of this onramp recommendation is to ask the Council to express an expectation that federal agencies engaging in co-management work with Tribes, and that provide reports to the Council under the B report items, would invite Tribal co-management partners to participate in these presentations to the Council. The Taskforce is not recommending it be mandatory for Tribal co-management partners to be present, but rather that the Council would express support for these federal agencies to have reached out and extended the invitation for an opportunity for co-presentation. The Taskforce reached consensus to add this onramp recommendation to the existing list.

In terms of priorities, the Taskforce agreed that two of the onramps could serve as foundational steps to support implementation of the guidelines: 1) adopting the LKTKS Protocol, and 2) developing a plan to increase capacity for non-economic social science and LKTKS expertise are high priorities for the Council. Beyond these two onramp recommendations, the Taskforce noted it is difficult to prioritize as they each offer different opportunities for incorporating LK, TK, and subsistence information.

Public testimony

The LKTKS Taskforce did not receive written public comments in advance of the meeting, but did have two public testifiers in the meeting, Ms. Stephanie Madsen and Mr. Steve Marx.