
Climate Resilience Planning Updates

Ecosystem Committee, March 6 2026

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Climate Resilience Planning Updates

Today's presentation is informational, looking ahead to Ecosystem Committee tasking for May 8, 2026 meeting

Review and provide recommendations on:

1. Harvest specifications process discussion document
2. Groundfish Management Policy Review document

+ ideas for plain language communication needs



Climate Resilience Planning Updates

Reminder: the Council's direction (2023) was to use IRA funding to accelerate or build upon existing Council climate-related priorities and initiatives. Workplan adaptations continue to focus on the Council's three funding objectives:

1. Develop a climate resilient management policy
2. Continue work to integrate Local Knowledge and Traditional Knowledge
3. Strengthen consideration of uncertainty and risk in harvest specifications



**Harvest specifications process discussion document
(Harvest Control Rule or HCR work)**



Big picture: Climate science and the Council process

At its June 2026 meeting, the Council will receive updates on two related products that support the integration of climate information into Council management recommendations:

- Climate Resilience Work Plan
- Harvest Specifications Process Discussion Document
 - EC will receive update and provide recommendations



Big picture: Climate science and the Council process

Climate Resilience Workplan – process clarification

- Established by the Council's December 2024 [motion](#) to guide near-term actions for enhanced climate resilient management. Intended to be a living work plan that may be augmented by the Council moving forward.
- Based on recommendations by the Climate Change Task Force
- Formatted workplan and progress update to Council in June



Workplan Elements

- Incorporate climate forecast linked management advice
- Incorporate climate-driven interactions and cascading impacts through use of ecosystem indicators and models
- Consider and incorporate dynamic management tools to increase in-season adaptation capacity
- **Review tier systems, consider climate-informed biomass targets and limits and climate-robust or forecast-informed harvest control rules**

Big picture: Climate science and the Council process

In June, the Council will receive updates on two related products that support the integration of climate information into Council management recommendations:

- Climate Resilience Work Plan
- **Harvest Specifications Process Discussion Document**
 - EC will receive update and provide recommendations in May

This discussion document will assist the Council in considering whether to initiate an analysis of opportunities for improving the climate resilience of harvest control rules or other aspects of the harvest specifications process



Harvest Specifications Discussion Document

Why focus on the harvest specifications process?

- Core Council responsibility; process for considering, documenting, and accounting for risk and uncertainty in setting harvest levels
- Direction from the Council (via Climate Resilience Workplan and IRA funding objectives)
- Recommendations and input from SSC, Plan Teams, and Climate Change Task Force, and national level discussions (SCS8)



Harvest Specifications Discussion Document

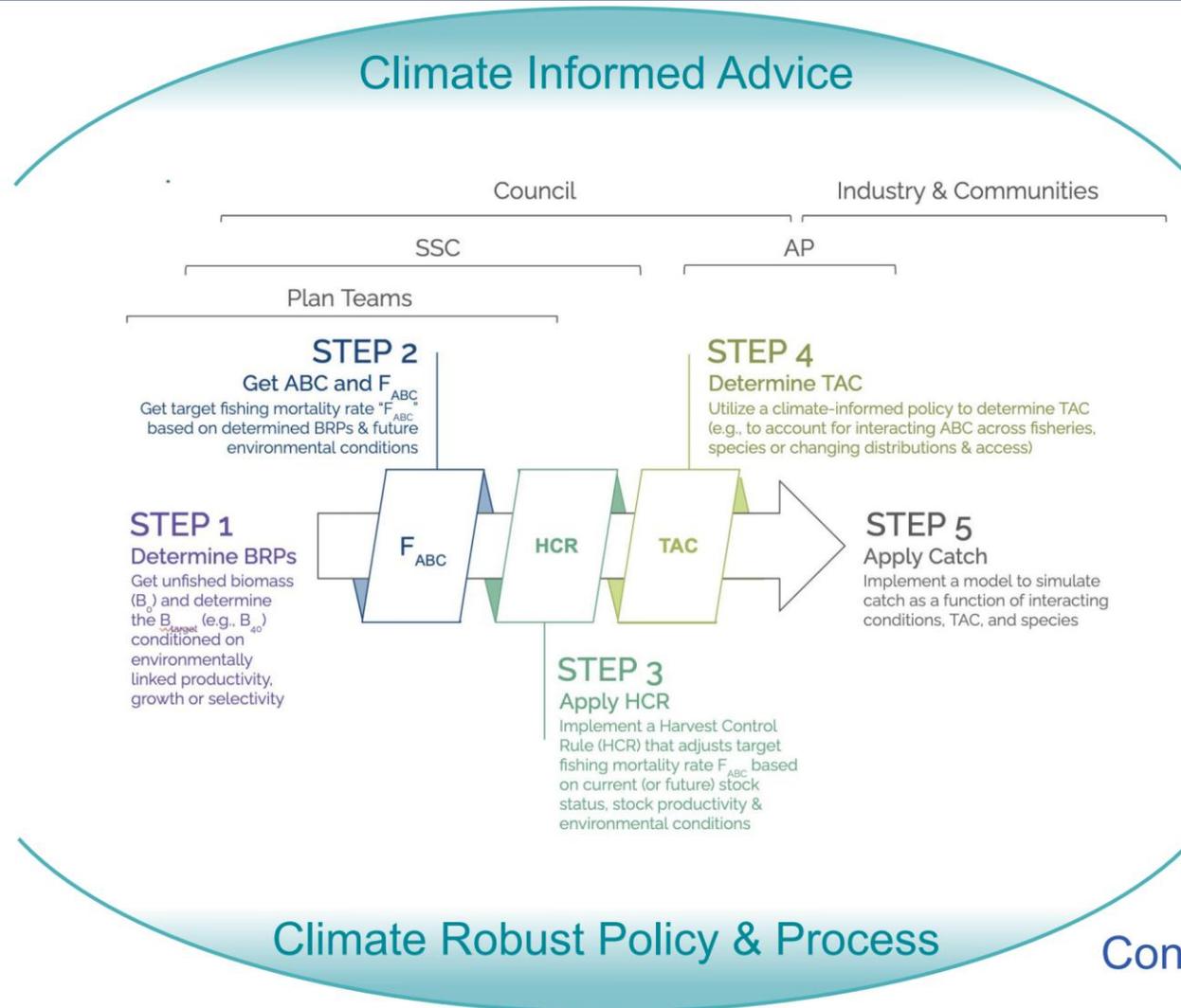
Why focus on the harvest specifications process? Questions to consider...

- How are risk and uncertainty already accounted for?
- Are climate change impacts captured well? Where could they be more fully accounted for, and for which stocks?
- From a policy perspective, what is the Council's tolerance for risk?



Climate Informed Advice

Climate workplan will provide the roadmap



Hoslmán et al. in prep



Conceptual Model



Climate Informed Advice

Harvest control rules are predetermined rules for determining ABC, based on stock status and information availability

Discussion, exploration, and simulation testing of alternative HCRs through CLIMs and at plan team level

The existing groundfish HCRs and tier system are precautionary and account for uncertainty through 1) hardwiring rules into FMPs based on availability and quality of information; 2) kinked harvest control rule that reduces harvest at lower abundance levels

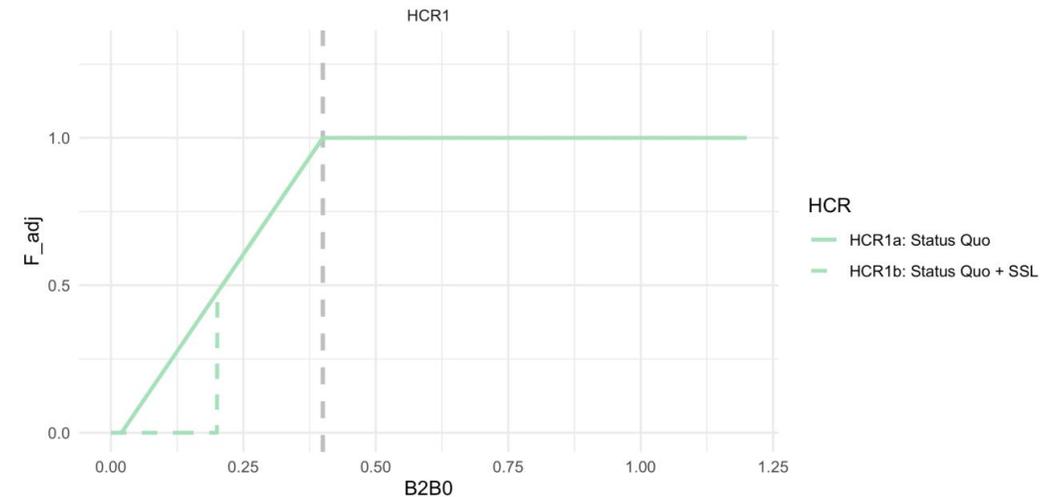


Figure 3. HCR 1: Status quo. This is the Tier 3 Harvest Control Rule, including the cutoff for certain species

An Overview of Stage 1 (2025-2026) Alternative HCR Evaluations Through ACLIM and GOACLIM. Prepared by Holsman et al and revised for Joint Groundfish Plan Team Meeting January 2026



Harvest Specifications Discussion Document

Components

- Overview of the current harvest specifications process for setting OFL, ABC, and TAC
- How risk and uncertainty are addressed through the existing process
 - Stock assessments
 - Setting ABC (risk tables, harvest control rules)
 - Setting TAC
- Mechanisms for making changes (with a focus on HCRs)



Harvest Specifications Discussion Document

Components (continued)

- What might be the Council's goals and objectives for adapting the harvest specs process to enhance climate resilience?
 - Examples: Long-term sustainability, buffering against shocks, stability
- Examples of recent stock-specific issues and how they could be addressed
- Considerations for moving forward with a Council action (FMP amendment) and/or direction for further exploration
 - Including time, resources, tradeoffs of different action pathways
- Communications and engagement – clearly communicate purpose and opportunities for engagement



Harvest Specifications Discussion Document

In May, the Ecosystem Committee could provide input on the following (co-chairs may provide more guidance)

- Comments on draft goals, objectives, and tradeoffs for adaptations to the harvest specifications process
- Next steps, including potential prioritization of analysis
- Ideas for ongoing communication and engagement



Goals, objectives, and tradeoffs

An example of a potential process tradeoff (will be further explored in document)

- Assessment changes - Stock assessment authors have some flexibility to update model parameters (e.g. biological reference points, time frame for recruitment)
 - Expert opinion, more flexible, not prescriptive, assessment and plan team level
- Harvest control rule changes
 - Hardwired into FMP, less flexible, potentially more consistent and transparent



Goals, objectives, and tradeoffs

An example of a tradeoff between objectives for climate resilience (will be further explored in document)

- An objective prioritizing long-term stability could lead to lower but more consistent yield over time
- An objective prioritizing responsiveness to changing abundance could lead to more volatile harvest levels over time



Groundfish Management Policy Review



Groundfish Management Policy Review

At its June 2026 meeting, the Council will review the Groundfish Management Policy Review document.

- The Ecosystem Committee will review this document in May and provide recommendations.



Background (from December 2025 presentation)

- Groundfish Management Policy Reviews are a long standing, self-imposed requirement established by the BSAI and GOA Groundfish FMPs
 - Most recently completed 2022 for 2019-2021
 - Next review will cover 2022-2025
- Purpose: review the Groundfish Management Policy and Council activities in support of the Policy, consider modifications to Management Policy objectives, and consider whether the Council should undertake additional activities to fulfill goals and objectives.



Groundfish Management Policy

Includes Management Approach statement, 9 goals, and 45 objectives

<https://www.npfmc.org/groundfish-management-policy-and-reviews/>

Goals:

1. Prevent overfishing
2. Promote sustainable fisheries and communities
3. Preserve food web
4. Manage incidental catch and reduce bycatch and waste
5. Avoid impacts to seabirds and marine mammals
6. Reduce and avoid impacts to habitat
7. Promote equitable and efficient use of fishery resources
8. Increase Alaska Native consultation
9. Improve data quality, monitoring, and enforcement



Review document structure

Previous reviews were provided in table format, mapping Council work and actions relative to goals and objectives.

3. Preserve Food Web <i>Ecosystem-based Fishery Management</i>	10. Develop indices of ecosystem health as targets for management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecosystem status reports for eastern Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Gulf of Alaska
	11. Improve the procedure to adjust acceptable biological catch levels as necessary to account for uncertainty and ecosystem factors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As needed, adopt ABC<maxABC • Risk tables developed for use in groundfish harvest specifications
	12. Continue to protect the integrity of the food web through limits on harvest of forage species.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forage stocks evaluated in groundfish SAFE reports
	13. Incorporate ecosystem-based considerations into fishery management decisions, as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bering Sea FEP Climate Adaptation Taskforce reports • Being Sea FEP LKTKS Taskforce reports • Development of ecological-socioeconomic profiles in groundfish SAFE report • Ecosystem Status Report in brief reports



Review document structure

Why take a different approach this time?

- Look holistically at the last 20 years of Groundfish Management Policy implementation
- Support objectives for climate resilience (Obj 1 – Develop a climate resilient management policy)
- Consider FMP policy guidance, including the Groundfish FMP Management Policy, goals, and objectives, in combination with other policy guidance including the Ecosystem Policy, Climate Resilience Workplan, Bering Sea FEP Goals and Objectives, and LKTKS Protocol



Review document structure

This review will still include a summary table, and also include a narrative component to help capture more of the story:

- Why and how the Council's work helps meet each objective
 - Including “no further action” items
- Examples of earlier milestones prior to the review period
- Examples of opportunities, information needs, and gaps identified through other Council work products
- Other relevant Council policy guidance



Example: Goal 3 - Preserve Food Web (Ecosystems)

This FMP goal has 4 corresponding objectives:

10. Develop indices of ecosystem health as targets for management.
11. Improve the procedure to adjust acceptable biological catch levels as necessary to account for uncertainty and ecosystem factors.
12. Continue to protect the integrity of the food web through limits on harvest of forage species.
13. Incorporate ecosystem-based considerations into fishery management decisions, as appropriate.

The review document will include a brief summary of the Council's current and past work related to each of these objectives.



Example: Goal 3 - Preserve Food Web (Ecosystems)

Objective 10: Develop indices of ecosystem health as targets for management.

Examples of key points and Council work:

- NMFS AFSC develops and reports on indices of ecosystem health through annual Ecosystem Status Reports. ESRs provide contextual information that can inform the annual harvest specifications process.
- Information in ESRs is mainly contextual rather than as targets for management, as worded in Objective 10.



Example: Goal 3 - Preserve Food Web (Ecosystems)

Objective 11: Improve the procedure to adjust acceptable biological catch levels as necessary to account for uncertainty and ecosystem factors.

Examples of key points and Council work:

- The Council and SSC have a well-established procedure for adjusting ABC to account for uncertainty and ecosystem factors. The Council routinely adjusts ABC below max permissible amount when advised by SSC.
- Risk tables are now used in all groundfish SAFE reports; help document concerns not explicitly addressed by assessment models; help inform SSC determination of whether to adjust from max ABC to account for uncertainty



Example: Goal 3 - Preserve Food Web (Ecosystems)

Objective 12: Continue to protect the integrity of the food web through limits on harvest of forage species.

Examples of key points and Council work:

- The Council took early, proactive measures to prevent the development of a directed commercial fishery in federal waters
- Herring managed as PSC
- SAFE report sections on forage fish



Example: Goal 3 - Preserve Food Web (Ecosystems)

Objective 13: Incorporate ecosystem-based considerations into fishery management decisions, as appropriate

Examples of key points and Council work:

- Ongoing: Contextual information for TAC setting provided in ESRs
- 2 Bering Sea FEP modules completed: Climate Change Task Force (2024) and Local and Traditional Knowledge Protocol (2023)
- Earlier milestones and building blocks: Bering Sea FEP, Arctic FMP, Aleutian Islands FEP



Example: Goal 3 - Preserve Food Web (Ecosystems)

Key point: The review document includes a brief “story” about how the Council’s work supports each objective.

- Priority: Accomplishments during the review period 2022-2025
- Ongoing work and established practices
- Earlier milestones
- Actions considered but not pursued
- Historical context



Example: Goal 3 - Preserve Food Web (Ecosystems)

Discussion (other information that could be informative to the review process)

- The Council has other ecosystem-related policy guidance through the Ecosystem Policy (2014) and Bering Sea FEP Goals and Objectives (2018)
 - This guidance provides more detail and specificity (e.g. biodiversity, resilience, benefits to user groups, LKTK)
 - This guidance refers to climate change and the need to account for and respond to changing conditions.



Groundfish Management Policy Review

In June, the Council will review this document and consider:

- Does FMP guidance, along with the broader body of Council policy guidance, continues to:
 - Communicate Council values and priorities
 - Provide guidance to staff
 - Provide transparency regarding how the Council considers information and tradeoffs in its management advice?
- Does the Council want to make any changes to goals and objectives, or consider other actions?

The Ecosystem Committee could provide input on these questions; co-chairs may have additional guidance at that time.



Plain Language Communications Materials



Climate Resilience Communications

Discussion

- Are there any terms or concepts that staff should prioritize for plain language, communications?
 - Public outreach materials as well as Council documents
- Are there other parts of the Council process that would benefit from clarification?

