

Ecosystem Committee Minutes

Tuesday, February 3, 2009 4pm-6pm
Renaissance Madison Hotel, Marion Room, Seattle, WA

Committee: Stephanie Madsen (chair), Jim Ayers, Jon Kurland, Dave Benton (teleconf), John Iani, Bill Karp (for Doug DeMaster), Dave Fluharty, Diana Evans (staff), Bill Wilson (staff)

Others attending included: Melanie Brown, Libby Logerwell, Clayton Jernigan, Chris Krenz, Mike Levine, Caleb Pungowiyi, Jaime Karnik, Marilyn Heiman, Ray Koonuk

Arctic FMP

The Committee received a presentation from Dr Logerwell on the recent Beaufort Sea survey, and from Mr Wilson and Ms Brown, reviewing the EA/RIR/IRFA for the Arctic FMP, and the draft FMP itself.

The Committee recommends to the Council to identify Alternative 2, Option 3, as its preferred alternative, and to adopt the Arctic FMP consistent with this preferred alternative. The Committee noted that the adoption of the Arctic FMP will be of international importance. Adopting the FMP strengthens the State Department's position in international negotiations with respect to fishery management in the Arctic.

The Committee discussed the historic red king crab fishery that is accommodated under Alternatives 3 and 4 of the analysis. In support of Alternative 2, the Committee noted that State of Alaska waters would remain open to fishing, under the authority of the State fishery management system. A local commercial fishery could still be authorized in State waters, if appropriate. Additionally, in Federal waters, future fisheries can be explored under exempted fishing permits or surveys to assess the available resources. The Council can undertake a deliberative process for determining how a fishery might evolve, or be authorized, during which the needs of local residents in the Arctic region can be taken into account. The Committee noted that establishing the FMP provides the best mechanism for the goals and needs of local people to be addressed in the development of any future Arctic fishery.

The Committee would like to commend the staff who have prepared this analysis and developed the FMP, particularly Mr Wilson and Ms Brown. Additionally, the Committee appreciates the work of NOAA GC attorneys in reviewing and preparing the FMP.