


MEMORANDUM

TO: Council, SSC and AP Members

FROM: Chris Oliver 
Executive Director

DATE: May 29, 2009

SUBJECT: Staff Tasking

ESTIMATED TIME 4 HOURS

ACTION REQUIRED

- a) Review tasking and committees and provide direction
- b) Discuss Rural Outreach Committee activities
- c) Review groundfish policy objectives and workplan

BACKGROUND

(a) Committees and Tasking

The list of Council committees is attached as Item D-4(a)(1). Item D-4(a)(2) is the three meeting outlook, and Item D-4(a)(3) provides a summary of current projects and tasking. The Council may wish to discuss priorities for completing ongoing projects, as well as any new tasks assigned during the course of this meeting.

(b) Rural Outreach Committee

Upon review of a discussion paper on ways to further the Council's policy priority to improve communication and participation with Alaska Native and rural communities (as identified in the workplan resulting from the Programmatic SEIS), the Council initiated a small workgroup to further review potential approaches and provide recommendations.

Upon review of the workgroup report in February, the Council approved the workgroup's recommendation to initiate a standing committee to provide input to the Council on ways to improve outreach to communities and Alaska Native entities. The committee will have three primary tasks: 1) to advise the Council on how to provide opportunities for better understanding and participation from Alaska Native and rural communities; 2) to provide feedback on community impacts sections of specific analyses; and 3) to provide recommendations regarding which proposed Council actions need a specific outreach plan and prioritize multiple actions when necessary.

The Council recommended a small committee of no more than nine members, which includes two Council members. The primary goal is to appoint members with the appropriate expertise, not necessarily specific group or geographic representation. The committee would be no-host, as are all Council committees. Several people sent letters of interest prior to the March 31 deadline. It is expected that the committee will be appointed shortly after the June Council meeting, and Council staff will contact the interested parties. A committee meeting will likely be scheduled over the summer in Anchorage.

(c) Groundfish Policy Objectives and Workplan

Consistent with the goals of adaptive management, the Council annually reviews its groundfish management policy. The Council's groundfish policy, including the approach statement and objectives, is attached as Item D-4(c)(1). It was adopted by the Council in 2004, following a comprehensive programmatic review of the fisheries.

The Council has developed a workplan to guide the full implementation of that policy in the management of the fisheries. This workplan was last revised by the Council in February 2007, and is attached as Item D-4(c)(2). The Council reviews the status of this workplan at each meeting, and the status update is attached as Item D-4(c)(3).

At this meeting, the Council is scheduled to review its policy objectives and the implementing workplan, and if appropriate, make any changes. While changes to the workplan can be made at any time, changes to the policy objectives require an FMP amendment. It has been five years since completion of the programmatic groundfish FMP SEIS, which contained the analysis supporting the Council's adoption of the current groundfish management policy. At some point, the current programmatic approach to groundfish fishery management, including the Council's stated objectives and accompanying analysis, will likely need to be supplemented or revised. The factors that influence whether and when to supplement or revise the policy objectives and accompanying analysis include, but are not limited to: (1) consideration of how fisheries management has changed since the objectives and analysis were originally prepared, (2) how environmental conditions affecting the fisheries have changed, (3) the status of the fish stocks and other marine life, and (4) whether new information has become available which may indicate the necessity for revised analyses. During the development of the PSEIS, it was expected that the useful lifespan for the analysis of the programmatic objectives was likely to be five to ten years. In considering what would be the appropriate timing for supplementing or revising the management objectives and the PSEIS, the Council may also want to look ahead to its upcoming agenda, as there may be changes planned to groundfish management that the Council may wish to resolve before initiating a programmatic review.

To assist with your review of the management policy and workplan, a discussion paper is attached as Item D-4(c)(4), which briefly reviews the management and environmental changes affecting the groundfish fisheries in the five years since the adoption of the management policy. The paper also provides a short background on the development of the 2004 PSEIS, and some considerations for supplementing the review in the future.

Finally, the Council has previously discussed the possibility of issuing a call for proposals focusing on the groundfish workplan. The Council may wish to take this into consideration at this meeting.